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VOLUME VI

CONTAINING

AN EXPOSITION

OF THE

THREE LETTERS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

TO

ROMANS.

WITH A COMMENTARY

LONDON:

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MDCCLXXV.

THE
WHOLE WORKS
OF THE
REV. JOHN LIGHTFOOT, D.D.
MASTER OF CATHERINE HALL
Cambridge.

EDITED BY THE
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Assistant Mastering Teacher at Bedford and the City Chapels; and Assistant Secretary of the Committee on the Revision of the Bible.

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VOLUME VI
CONTAINING
AN EXPOSITION
OF
THREE ARTICLES OF THE APOSTLES' CREED;
AND
SERMONS.

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MDCCLXXII.

AN
EXPOSITION
OF
Three Articles
OF
THE APOSTLES' CREED:
AND
SERMONS.

BY THE
REV. JOHN LIGHTFOOT, D.D.

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J. HATT, CAMBRIDGE.

MDCCCXXII.

EXPOSITION

Three Months

THE APOSTLES CRIED:

SERMONS.

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MASTER OF CATHEDRAL THEOLOGY

EDITED BY THE

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Author of "The Principles of Religion," and "The Principles of Morals,"
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OF
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- II. THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.
- III. THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

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- II. THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.
- III. THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

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AN
EXPOSITION,

&c.

I.

He descended into Hell.

THE^a ground of this article of the Creed is in Acts ii, 27; “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.” The reason of its insertion we shall see afterward. An article obscure, and that hath bred many disputes; and the rendering of it so in English, some offences. For it seemeth harsh, that Christ’s soul descended into hell, which, in our English language, speaketh most plainly and usually, ‘The place of the damned;’ a place very improper to look for the soul of Christ in, when departed out of his body. He and his betrayer Judas, to meet in the same place! He that had by death purchased heaven for others,—himself, after death, to descend into hell! Not an article in our Christian faith hath more need of explication to bring it to common reason, or analogy of faith.

The course I shall take in explication of it, shall, first, be to clear it from that meaning that is improper and offensive, and that carries not probability with it; and then to unfold the proper and genuine meaning of it.

I. The general interpretation of it in the church of Rome is,—That his soul really and locally descended into the place of torment, but upon some other errand; namely, as they themselves express it, “That Christ, in his soul, went to hell, to deliver the patriarchs and all just men, there holden in bondage till his death.” So the Rhemists, on Acts ii. 27. To this they apply Eph. iv. 9: “Now, he that ascended, what is it, but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?” Where the same Rhemists, ‘He meaneth specially of his descending into hell.’

^a English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1341.

Likewise, they apply to the same sense, 1 Pet. iii. 19: "By which also he went, and preached unto the spirits in prison." And there they go farther, and say, that 'Christ also preached in hell, and delivered some thence, that had been there since the days of Noah: some that were good men, but had not believed Noah's word about the flood; but when they saw it come, believed, and were sorry for their error; and, indeed, died by the flood corporally, but in the state of salvation; and, being chastised in the next life for their unbelief, were delivered by Christ's descending thither.'

Do you not see plainly, whither all this ado tends? namely, to prove their purgatory, and to maintain the profit they get by it. The doctrine of which business is this,—that some dying not so bad as to be damned, yet not so absolutely good as to go to heaven, are sent to purgatory, and there their sins scoured away by fire and torment; yet some, after a hundred, some after two hundred, years, &c. go to heaven: but that the pope, by his power,—and the priests, by their singing masses and dirges,—can bring them out sooner, than otherwise their time should be. And hence so vast revenues have been bestowed upon their monasteries, chapels, and chantries, upon this reason,—that the priests there should say masses, and use dirges and prayers for the souls of the founders, to deliver them out of purgatory.

And thus, they make this article of Christ's descent, a matter, rather of profit, than of faith; of money, rather than of edification. And were not profit or worldly advantage in the wind, there would never be such struggling with them to maintain points against reason and religion, as there is.

Some Protestants hold local descent, but under another notion,—viz. that Christ went to triumph over the devils and damned. To which opinion, viz. the local ascent, to speak in gross, and to these particular reasons of it:—

First; Let us take up the two places last alleged, for the first I shall take up afterward.

Ephes. iv. 9: "Now, that he ascended, what is it, but that he descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" Where it is first observable, that they conclude hell to be under the earth, or within it; which is a fancy of the heathen poets, and others, that concluded both the place of torment, and of happiness, to be down in the earth. These men

have learned from Scripture, that the place of the blessed is above in heaven, and so they refuse that part of the heathen's opinion; but retain the other, that hell is underground. Upon what ground, who can show? It is neither agreeable to reason, nor at all to Scripture. Not to reason, to imagine a place underground to be a place for souls and spirits, which are so far from an earthly substance. Not to Scripture, which tells us^a, that "the devil is the prince of the air," and not dwelling underground: that tells us^b, that "the damned are tormented before the angels, and before the throne of the Lamb;" not in the bottom of the earth, or underground. And time will be, when there will be no earth at all; and where will hell be found then? May we never know where the place of hell is! but, certainly, it is a most senseless and irrational thing to hold it to be within this earth.

And, to take up the words of the apostle: he speaks of Christ's 'ascending' and 'descending.' And whence did Christ ascend to heaven? Not from hell, but from off the earth^c. And what, then, means his 'descending,' but from heaven to earth? And whereas he saith, "To the lower parts of the earth," he compares earth to heaven, not earth with itself. As if he should say, "He descended from heaven to these lower parts of the earth, to dwell among men;"—as the Scripture doth generally expound his 'descending from heaven' in such a sense.

1 Pet. iii. 19: "By which he went and preached to the spirits in prison." It is plain here, St. Peter speaks of Christ's preaching by his Spirit in the mouth and ministry of Noah: as I have somewhere explained it.

These texts thus spoken to, whereby they would prove Christ descended into hell, to preach to and deliver souls; now let us take their opinion in pieces, and consider them several.

And first comes to be observed, how improbable, ridiculous, and irreligious, an opinion it is, to conceive that the patriarchs were in limbo. "Dato uno absurdo, multa sequuntur;" "Yield one absurdity, and many more follow."—So grant this, and these rough and rugged absurdities follow:—

1. That it was almost four thousand years before any

^a Eph. ii. 2.

^b Rev. xiv. 10.

^c Acts, i.

soul went to heaven. Christ died anno mundi 3960 ; but forty short of four thousand : and is it not absurd to think heaven empty all that while ? At the creation, the earth, the air, the waters, were filled with inhabitants,—and heaven to be a tenement that stood empty ! Sure God was a very hard landlord, that would take in no tenant of so long a time.

2. It is as absurd a thing to think a thief should be the first that went to heaven ; for, by this opinion, the good thief did so. The house to stand long empty, and a thief, that repents but at the last gasp, taken in first ; and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not yet entertained nor admitted there. “ Publicans and harlots shall enter in before you.” Yes, before you, scribes and Pharisees, that shut the door of the kingdom of heaven against yourselves:—but for Abraham, and Moses, and the other ancient prophets and good men, that sought after heaven all their time, to be shut out, and a thief and a robber let in before them,—this is hardly handsome to conceive.

3. It is an absurd thing, that Abraham, while he lived, should be a friend of God, converse with God, entertain God at his table ; and, when he is dead, he is become a mere stranger to God, thrust into a hole, where there is no sight of God, no communion with him ; but God and Abraham now are as mere strangers. For Moses to converse with God face to face, when alive ; and, when dead, there is an end of all his communion. How comfortless would he have gone to mount Nebo to die, had he believed, as the Papists do, that he must go to limbo, and never enjoy God for so many hundred years, till Christ should come to fetch him out !

When he appeared in glory^d, think ye that he came out of limbo in that glory ? And when Abraham is proposed in that parable before Christ's death^e, think ye that he is proposed as being in limbo, or in heaven ?

4. It is absurd to think, that holy ones, that served God all day, and should at night receive their wages, should be denied it. God forbids to detain wages ; and he not to pay his workmen, of a thousand, two thousand, years after they have done their work ! Abel, a faithful servant of God, died for him, and his truth : and when he comes to expect his reward in heaven,—“ No, Abel, thou must to limbo,

^d Luke, ix. 31.

^e Luke, xvi. 22, 23.

where there is no glimpse of heaven, nor comfort from God, for these three thousand five hundred years."

David^f saith, "He will dwell in the house of God for ever." In the temple here, and then in heaven hereafter. "No (will a Papist say) David, thou must dwell a thousand years in limbo, before thou comest to heaven."—A hard master! that rewards his servants no better, that serve him here; and when they should come to enjoy the fruit of all their labour, then God puts them away far from him, and they enjoy not what they laboured for.

Such doctrine is that of the Romanists, and such absurdities they make people believe, to build up their purgatory for their profit. Nor are they only thus absurd, but as irreligious in this doctrine.

1. They will make men believe, that there was not divine and spiritual power in Christ for salvation, without his bodily power, and personal presence: they limit the Spirit, and the operation, of Christ to his presence: they give that to Christ's presence, that God never meant: they account the Virgin Mary so incomparably holy and happy above all others, because she carried Christ in her womb, and arms; as though it were that, and not faith and grace, that made her so holy and happy.

Superstition is standing upon a thing over and above; leaping over that which is the proper duty and reality of holiness, and resting upon something besides it. So concerning Christ, superstition hath taught men to take up something in opinion and practice, over and besides what is needful about the worship and love of Christ: to worship the cross, because Christ suffered on it: to put holiness in those places, where he once was, as the manger, the sepulchre, &c. Of this nature and rank is placing so much in the bodily presence of Christ, and overlooking the efficacy and work of his Spirit. Transubstantiation is of this form, and this that we are speaking of, the like,—viz. that the patriarchs could not be saved by the divine power and Spirit of Christ, but he must come first in person before, to bring them to heaven.

2. They make grace not sufficient to save, but something else must be added, viz. purgatory-fire, to purge out those sins that grace did not, or could not, purge out. It is said,

^f In Psal. xxiii.

2 Cor. xii. 9, "My grace is sufficient for thee." They will say, 'Not; purgatory-fire must help out to sufficiency.' They will tell you, 'It is rare for any to die so spotless, as instantly to go to heaven, but he must have some scouring elsewhere before.'

And indeed this may deserve our consideration, not to make us think of any purgatory hereafter, but to affect us with what we have to do here.

It is undoubted, that to die in any sin is damnable. "Ye shall die in your sins," is as much as, 'when ye die, ye shall be damned, because ye shall die in sin.' See John viii. 21; "Ye shall die in your sins:—whither I go, ye cannot come." He that dies in his sins, in any of his sins, must never come where Christ is. Imagine a man had got off all his sins but one, and that stuck to him dying; that would damn him, as well as all. Suppose it this, 'I cannot, will not, forgive such a one, that hath done me this wrong:' that spot of malice will keep him out of heaven, as well as if he were dawbed all over with all sins whatsoever. Nay, to come to a lower rate, be it but a little love of the world, an unwillingness to part with the pleasures and profits of it; is it possible that man should go to heaven, that had rather be here? Nay, yet lower,—be it some particular sin, that he hath chanced to forget, and not repent of; can he with that go to heaven?

Hitherto Papists and we agree, that there is no going to heaven with any spot of sin upon the soul; but here we differ:—They say, 'A man may go out of this world with many spots of sin upon him, yet at last go to heaven, these being purged out in purgatory.' We say, with the Scripture, 'That after death there is no redemption: that this is the acceptable time, and day of salvation: that if a sinner's sun set in a cloud, it will be dark with him for ever: that if he die in any sin, his condition is damnable, and no help afterward.' "Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die^s." And then it shall never be purged.

And the reasons of this are,

First; Because any one sin loved, unrepented of, damneth as well as many; by the rule of St. James^h,—'For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery,

^s Isa. xxii. 14.

^h Chap. ii. 10, 11.

said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law."

Secondly; Because the other world is a world of eternity; and in eternity there is no change. He that goes sinful into that, can never be changed.

Thirdly; Because it is impiety to make any thing sharer with the blood and grace of Christ in man's salvation. It is said, "We are saved by his blood, and by his grace." There needs no purgatory-fire, unless these were weak and insufficient.

Object. But is it possible any one should die without some sin sticking to him? Original sin sticks: it may be, a man has forgot some actual sin to repent of it: it may be, there is some impatience upon him, his heart may fly out into passion: never without infirmities.

Answ. I. Let me question, Durst any die with any sin sticking on him?—Thou bearest malice: darest thou die so?—Thou art proud, covetous; darest thou die so? Who is so little taught the doctrine of salvation, as to put himself to such a venture? At least, who is not convinced of the danger? Baalam loved the wages, the wages of unrighteousness, yet he could wish "to die the death of the righteousⁱ." Even conscience beareth witness to this truth, that dying in any sin is damnable.

But how is it possible, but some sin will stick to the best of men? I answer,

II. True, that there is no man living without sin: but we are to distinguish upon two things:—

First; Betwixt sin and guilt. If we consider pressly, it is not the sin that immediately damns, but the guilt of the sin. A thief hanged: the sin of robbing is past and gone; but the guilt of it brings him to the gallows: so sin, as to the act, is over and gone, but the guilt sticks. Now there is some sin, which binds not a man over to guilt to condemn him; "Blessed is the man, to whom the Lord imputeth not sin^j." There is sin, but the guilt of it is not charged on men. But what sin is that? I might answer, 'All sins already pardoned, have they been never so great.' "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth^k." But we speak of sins, that stick at the instant of death. Therefore,

ⁱ Num. xxiii. 10.

^j Psal. xxxii. 2.

^k Rom. viii. 33.

Secondly, We distinguish upon the sticking of sin to the flesh, and to the heart. A saint hath sin sticking to the flesh, not to the heart; "With the mind I serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin¹." As, if we get the disease from the heart, it is not so deadly; so saints having got sin from their hearts, it is not damning to them. They hate it, but it cleaves to their flesh. So that, the guilt of such sins is pardoned all along, because the saint all along strives and prays against them. "It is not I, but sin in me." Not my heart, or consent; but sin in my flesh, that will neither be got out, nor quiet. In a word, a dying sin cannot kill a dying man. Sin is mortified all along; and if in death it stirs, yet it is dying, and hath not power to kill.

And this have I spoken to remove that error about this article of the Creed,—that Christ descended to hell to fetch souls to heaven, that yet wanted something to bring them thither.

II. A second opinion and interpretation is, that he descended locally to triumph over the devils and the damned. An interpretation that seems to carry more sense and innocence; and yet is far from the meaning of the article. To take it into examination:—

First, To consider something concerning Christ's soul, when separate from his body.

I. It is undoubted that it went to heaven, as soon as departed, and it is very unwarrantable to look for it in hell; unless we have good evidence of the Scripture, at least of reason, for it. His words on the cross to the good thief were, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise^m:" and his last words to God were, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spiritⁿ." Now, who can doubt, but he was instantly in heaven, and his soul with God? And when, and indeed why, should it go to hell? Christ was dead but thirty-six hours; and his soul to be on the cross, in heaven, and hell, in that time, is a flitting up and down, that unless the Spirit of Christ himself in Scripture tell us so, how can we believe it? That it flitted from the cross to heaven, Scripture is plain: but that it flitted from heaven to hell, we are yet to seek.—"Ye shall seek me, and not find me." Truly according to this opinion, we know not where to seek him,

¹ Rom. vii. ult.

^m Luke, xxiii. 43.

ⁿ Ver. 46.

nor to find him, in that time. If you will take the propriety of his own words, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit^o ;” and^p, “I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee.—And now I come to thee;” you may certainly conclude that his soul was with God, while it was separate: but that it was in hell any moment of that time, there is not one tittle of Scripture to give any evidence, but Acts ii. 27, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,” and this article:—of which we shall show a far other sense.

II. Was it possible, that Christ’s soul should go from heaven to hell? The souls of the glorified saints cannot; and I question, whether Christ’s could or not. See Luke xvi. 26: “Between us and you, there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from us to you, cannot.” Whence I observe two things,—1. What is meant by a ‘great gulf?’ an insuperable unpassableness from one to another. But especially, 2. “They that would pass from hence to you.” Are there any in heaven, that ever would go to hell? The devils indeed chose it: but I question, whether they understood what hell meant so well, as they do now. But never blessed soul did nor could do it: they are too much delighted with the happy enjoyment of God, to make such a choice. But Christ, by that expression in the parable, does the more show, how it is impossible for a soul, once in heaven, to go thence to hell: that if it could be supposed, they would do it,—it cannot be done. And could Christ’s soul do it any more? Could Christ’s soul have any delight to leave the joys of heaven to go to hell?

III. There is no reason, no Scripture, to tell us, that Christ’s soul had any thing to do, as to the work of redemption, or mediatorship, when separate from the body. What will you make of this ‘triumphing?’ Was it any part of his redeeming, or mediatorship? If it were not, what was it? If it were, why not acted ‘per totum Christum,’ ‘by whole Christ?’ Christ performed the whole law, as ‘totus Christus,’ ‘whole Christ;’ viz. as to his human nature, in soul and body. He was upon the cross, as ‘totus Christus,’ ‘whole Christ:’ he rose, ascended, sits in heaven, as ‘totus Christus,’ ‘whole Christ,’ body and soul: and we are bound to believe, ‘in toto Christo,’ ‘in whole Christ,’ as

^o Luke, xxiii. 46.

^p John, xvii. 11. 13.

redeemer, and mediator,—as God, so perfectly man, of body and soul consisting. And it were but an improper piece of faith, to believe so great a thing, as his work in hell is made to be, to be done by a part of Christ; for his soul was but one part of him. But,

Secondly, Let us speak a little to this ‘triumphing.’

I. The opinion is taken up, I suppose, in allusion to the custom of the Romans. They conquered, and then led their prisoners in triumph: the conqueror in his triumphal chariot, the captives in chains after it. Cleopatra would kill herself, rather than be thus led in triumph. Now what was this, but a pompous, proud, and vain show? And what will they make of this triumph of Christ? Nothing but a show. For what did he in this triumph? Who can imagine what, but show himself there? Did he conquer hell then? If he did, what was it with? What did his soul there to conquer hell? How he conquered hell and death by dying and rising, we can tell; but how his soul conquered with bare going thither, who can tell you?

Or did he augment the torments of the devils and damned? That needed not, nor indeed could it be done, as I shall show afterward. What then did Christ’s soul there in its triumph, unless (as he, “Veni, vidi, vici,” “I came, I saw, I overcame”) it conquered hell by looking into it? “Natura nihil facit frustra;” “Nature does nothing in vain:” much less the God of nature. And Christ, in his lifetime, never did, spoke, thought, any thing in vain. And it is unhandsome to think, that his soul after death should go out of the bosom of his Father into hell, to do, nobody can imagine what. For who can tell, what it did in triumphing there?

II. Was not Christ under his humiliation, till his resurrection? Was he not under it, whilst he lay in the grave? He himself accounts it so^a, ‘Thou wilt not suffer, my soul being in the state of separation, my body to see corruption:’ to be trampled on by death, to be triumphed over by Satan, that yet had it here. If you imagine his soul triumphing, or vapouring in hell (for I cannot imagine what it should do there, unless to vapour), how might Satan vapour again? “Thou soul of Jesus, dost thou come to triumph here? Of what, I pray thee? Have I not cause to triumph over thee? Have I not procured his death? Ba-

^a Psal. xvi. 10.

nished thee out of his body, and got it into the grave? And dost thou come to triumph here?" Let us first see, whether he can get out from among the dead, before we talk of his triumph over him, that had the power of death.

So that if we should yield to so needless a point, as Christ's going to triumph in hell, yet certainly it would be but very unseasonable to have gone thither, when he had not yet conquered,—but his body was still unto death, and as yet under the conquest of Satan. This had been to triumph before victory: as Ben-hadad's vapour was to Ahab, when he received that answer, "Let not him that girdeth on his sword, boast himself, as he that putteth it off."

The beginning of Christ's kingdom, was his resurrection: for then had he conquered death, and him that had the power of death, the devil. And so the Scripture generally states it. I need cite no proof, but two of his own speeches: Matt. xxvi. 29, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day, when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom:" that is, 'after my resurrection, when I have conquered the enemies of God, and set up his kingdom.'—And, Matt. xxviii. 18; "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." And this was after his resurrection. But is it not improper, to dream of a triumph, before a conquest? That Christ should triumph as king, before he had put on his kingdom? As Esth. v. 3, "On the third day, she put on the kingdom." For so it is in the Hebrew. The days before, she had been under fasting, mourning, humiliation; and that was not a time of royalty and triumph. So, on the third day, Christ rose, and put on his kingdom: the days before, he had been under death, had abased himself: a very unfit and unseasonable time for his soul to go and triumph.

III. As concerning Christ's triumphing over devils.—His victory over Satan was of another kind of nature, than to go amongst them, to show terribly, or speak terribly: for what else can we imagine his soul did in that triumph in hell? It is said, Heb. ii. 14, "That through death he might destroy him, that had the power of death, that is, the devil." *Destroy him? How?* We may say of him, as he of the traitor, "Vivit, etiam in senatum venit;" "He lives, yea, he comes into the council-house." So, is the devil destroyed? He

is alive, walketh, rageth, ruleth. He walked about the earth, before Christ's death^r. So hath he done ever since; "Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour^s." "He was a murderer from the beginning," to Christ's death^t. So hath he been ever since: he goes about seeking to devour, and he doth devour. He wrought in the children of disobedience before, and "he now worketh^u." And how hath Christ conquered, destroyed him? You must look for the conquest and triumph of Christ over him, not so much in destroying his person, as destroying his works: "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil^v."

I might here speak of many things: I shall only mention two or three particulars, wherein the victory of Christ over the devil by his death doth consist.

1. By his death, he hath conquered the very clamours of Satan, paying a ransom for all his people. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect^w?" Satan is ready to say, 'I lay a charge and claim to them; for they have been disobedient.' But Christ hath paid a satisfaction for all their disobedience. Satan, thou art cast in thy suit; the debt is paid. How is the devil confounded at the loss of such a prize, as he expected? And how does the death and merits of Christ here triumph? Now, Goliath, David defies thee: touch one in the camp of Israel, if you can or dare: they are all redeemed, and ransomed: thou hast nothing to do with them. And 'the ransomed of the Lord shall go to Sion with everlasting joy. Rejoice, O heathens, for the false accuser is cast out.' Here is a glorious triumph by the righteousness and holiness of Christ, delivering all his people.

2. By his death, he brake the partition-wall, and brings in the heathen. Oh! how did Satan hold them in slavery! —'Pharaoh, let my people go.'—'No, I know not the Lord, nor will I let them go.'—'But thou shalt be brought to it; and by the death of a paschal lamb, they shall go, whether thou wilt or no.'—Two thousand years had they been in his slavery: sure, thought he, this shall be for ever. But by the death of poor despised Jesus at Jerusalem, the prison

^r Job, i.

^s 1 Pet. v. 8.

^t John, viii. 44.

^u Eph. ii. 2.

^v 1 John, iii. 8.

^w Rom. viii. 33.

doors are open, and all these captives are gone free. Rejoice, ye 'prisoners of hope,' as they are called, Zech. ix. 12. I cannot but think of the case of Paul and Silas^x, in an inner prison, their feet in the stocks, the doors fast, and a strong guard; and there comes one shake, and all fly open, and all the prisoners are loosed. Jailor, what sayest thou now? Thou mayest even draw thy sword, and end thyself: all thy prisoners are gone.

3. Nay, yet farther; Jailor, thou must to prison thyself. Ponder on those words, Rev. xx. 1—3: 'The great angel' is Christ, the 'old serpent' is the devil; there Christ binds and imprisoneth him; and that with the 'great chain' of the gospel. Observe the passage, "He shut him up in the bottomless pit." What! in hell for ever? That he should never go abroad again? Yea, you have him loose again, ver. 7; and he hath been always going about, as in 1 Pet. v; but he ties him up, that he should not 'deceive the nations,' ver. 3; and when he is loosed again, ver. 8, it is his being loose to 'deceive the nations.'

Observe, by the way, the phrase, "He shuts him up;" that is, restrains him from deceiving and seducing people. It is hell and prison to the devil not to be doing mischief. So the Psalmist speaks of the wicked children of the devil, "They sleep not, rest not, if they do not evil." It is a torment to them, if they may not be sinning.

Well, how doth Christ 'bind Satan,' that he do not 'deceive?' By sending the gospel to undeceive them. So that this is the victory of Christ against the devil. The very telling of his death, and merits, is that that overcomes the devil: the very word of his death, and resurrection, is that that overthrows the devil, and his power. So is 1 Cor. vi. 3, to be taken; "Know ye not, that we shall judge angels?"

Now, needed Christ's soul to go to hell, to tell the devil these tidings, and to triumph there? He felt the building of his kingdom fall about his ears every moment. He needed no such message to go and tell him, he had conquered him. This is the triumph of Christ over the devil, by the virtue and power of his death; and not by any vocal or actual declaration of it by his soul, now separate from his body.

IV. As to Christ's soul triumphing over the damned,

^x Acts, xvi.

needed there any such thing? or could his soul do any such thing?

Think you Christ's soul doth, or could rejoice in the damnation of the damned? There is "joy in heaven when a sinner is saved." Is there joy too, when he is damned? That tender expression of God, "As I live, I delight not in the death of a sinner," doth it give us any room to think, that he can rejoice in their damnation? That tender soul of Christ, that, but six or eight days before, wept for the destruction of Jerusalem, with "O! that thou hadst known in this thy day the things, that belong to thy peace,"—can we think, that that soul could go to hell to triumph, and insult over poor damned souls? He had cause to triumph and rejoice over the conquered devils: but had he the like cause or heart to triumph over damned souls? What was the reason of his triumphing over the devils? Because he had subdued themselves only? He mastered them while alive, in casting them out, and commanding them at his pleasure. He cast them into hell, by his divine power, as soon as they had sinned: but his triumph over them by his death and resurrection was for his people's sake. We cannot say, Christ hath any pleasure in the damnation of the very devils; but he had pleasure in the conquest of devils,—because he had delivered his people from them. Ah! most divine soul of Christ, so infinitely full of charity, that gave itself a sacrifice for sin; that men might not be damned,—can that rejoice and insult over poor souls' damnation? Look but upon Christ's tenderness and earnestness for souls here, that they come not to damnation; and then guess, how little delight he taketh in it, when they are damned. Let us apply these two passages to this; Ezek. xviii. 23, "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?"—And ver. 32, "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth." In the Hebrew it is, in the strictest propriety, "In the death of him that is dead:" 'I have not pleasure, that he die,—and no pleasure in his death, when he is dead.'

What is there more plain in Scripture, and in all God's actings, than this,—That God would not have men damned, if they would embrace salvation? What speak these expressions,—"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth?" "Not willing that

any should perish, but that all should come to repentance^a?" Certainly, whatsoever else, this is plain enough, that God had rather men should be saved, than damned. How is this written in Scripture, as in letters of gold, that he that runs, may read it! How was it written in letters of Christ's own blood, that was shed, that men might not be damned,—but that whosoever believeth, might have eternal life! And how is this written in God's patience, beseechings, in his affording means of salvation! I need not to instance in particulars.

Well, men will not be saved, but choose death before life. Doth Christ delight, rejoice, to damn them, when they must come to it? Think ye, he pronounceth 'Go, ye cursed,' with as much delight, as 'Come, ye blessed?' That he insults, triumphs, over poor damned wretches in their damnation? Read his heart in such passages as these: "And it repented the Lord, that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart^a." What! because he had made them? No: but because he, having made them, must now destroy them. "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men^b:" so he doth not damn willingly, nor destroy the children of men. And, once for all, "I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy, and devour at once^c."—"I will cry, and destroy:" but it is grievous to God, as pangs of a 'travailing woman.'

Thus much as hath been spoken, may show, how unlikely, and, indeed, how unchristian, a thing it is to conceive, that Christ's soul went purposely into hell, to triumph and insult over the miserable and damned. And so you see, that this article cannot mean his soul's descending into the place of torment to triumph over the devils and damned:—so that we must yet look for another sense of it.

III. A third interpretation, then, is this,—that it means the torments he suffered in soul upon his cross. Some word it, that 'he suffered the extreme wrath of God:' some, 'the very torments of hell:' some, 'that he was, for the time, in the state of the damned.' I reluct to speak these things: but this gloss some make upon this article: and while they go about to magnify the love of Christ in suffering such things for men, they so much abase and vilify his person, in making it liable to such a condition.

^a 2 Pet. iii. 9.^b Gen. vi. 6.^c Lam. iii. 33.^c Isa. xlii. 14.

The sense of the article we must refuse, unless we should speak and think of Christ that, which doth not befit him. The soul of the dearly-beloved of God, to lie under the heaviest wrath of God! The Lord of heaven and earth to be under the torments of hell! and the Captain of our salvation to be under the condition of the damned! Let it not be told in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Ascalon! Let not the Jews hear it, nor the Turks understand such a thing; lest they blaspheme our Lord of life more than they do.

The colour which is put upon this opinion by them, that hold it, is because Christ upon the cross bare the sins of men; and, therefore, that he was to bear the wrath, torments, and damnation, that man had deserved. And for this they produce those places; "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all^d:" "Who his ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree^e." And they would have Christ to mean no less, when he cried out, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

For the stating of this matter, I lay down these two things:—

I. That it was impossible, Christ should suffer the wrath of God, the torments of hell,—and be in the case of the damned for any cause of his own.

II. That he did not, could not, suffer these, though he bare the sins of all his people. I shall speak to both these, under these five observations:—

I. In all the passages of Christ at his suffering, you cannot find that he looks upon God as an angry God. Begin at his prayer at his last supper^f. Can you find there even the least hint, that he doubted of God's favour to him? It is the rule of the apostle^g, That "we lift up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." Can we think, that Christ ever prayed with doubting? Especially, look into that prayer, and there is not the least tincture of it^h; "Father, glorify thy Son." Did his heart then any whit suspect, that God was angry at him? "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal lifeⁱ." Are these the words of one that suspected he could come under the heaviest wrath of God?—"I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work, which thou gavest me to do^k." Are these

^d Isa. liii. 6.

^e 1 Pet. ii. 24.

^f John, xvii.

^g 1 Tim. ii. 8.

^h John, xvii. 1.

ⁱ Ver. 2.

^k Ver. 4.

the words of one, that thought he could ever be repayed for so doing, with wrath and vengeance, and the torments of hell?—"And now, O Father, glorify me with thine ownself, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was^l:" "And now, Father, I come unto thee^m:" "Thou, Father, art in me, and I in theeⁿ:" "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory^o." Had Christ, when he spake these things, any suspicion or thought, that he could possibly come under the heavy wrath of God?

It is said, John xviii. 1, he went beyond Cedron. There he is in his agony: then he prays, "Let this cup pass from me." Why? What did he see in the cup? Bitterness enough,—but not one drop of the dregs of God's wrath. Guess his case by the case of sinful men. A Stephen, a Cranmer, a Ridley, a martyr, is brought to the stake: he hath a cup put into his hands, and that very bitter; but doth he see any of God's wrath in it? Martyrs could not have gone so joyfully to death, had they seen God angry in that bitter dispensation. Christ could not have gone so readily to his sufferings, had he thought he had gone to encounter God's indignation.

Look at his words on the cross, "Hodie mecum in paradiso:" "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Were these the words of one under the torments of hell? "Pater, in manus tuas:" "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Did he apprehend God angry, as at the damned, when he spake these words? Nay, those words, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," speak not, that he felt the wrath of God, but a bitter providence; that God had left him to such wrackings and tortures, and to such wicked hands. So that look at Christ's passages at and near his passion, and you find not one word or action, that doth bewray, that Christ felt himself any whit at all under God's fury.

Nay, look through the Scripture: whatsoever is spoken of Christ, it sets him far from being to be thought liable to the wrath of God. Was Christ a child of wrath, as well as others? Scripture tells you No. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him^p." How far is that from such lan-

^l John, xvii. 5.^m Ver. 13.ⁿ Ver. 21.^o Ver. 24.^p Isa. xlii. 1.

guage as this, ‘Behold Christ under my wrath, behold him under the torments of hell.’ And so that passage, “Lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased^a :” and, at his transfiguration, “in whom I am well pleased.” And does he ever come to be angry at him, as at the damned, and to lay his fury on him, as on the tormented in hell? It troubles me to think any Christian should hold such an opinion concerning our Saviour; and, indeed, where there is little need to imagine such a thing. Could not Christ have wrought redemption without enduring such heavy wrath, then it were not so improper to conceive so:—but,

II. Christ, in the work of redemption, had not to deal with the wrath of God, but the justice of God: not with his wrath, to bear it,—but with his justice, to satisfy it. There is a great deal of difference may be made betwixt wrath and justice; and betwixt satisfying one and the other. A judge, condemning a malefactor, weeps and grieves,—is there any wrath? No, but only justice. The malefactor satisfies the justice of the law; no wrath stirring. Consider, what was the debt men owed to God? What owest thou to my Master? It will be said, ‘Damnation, and suffering eternal torments.’ True, these were due to them; but the debt was of another nature,—viz. obedience. Damnation was the penalty upon forfeiture of bonds, but the debt was obedience: that which man owed to God, before he became sinful; which he owes to God, as he is God; and which the law challengeth, and which the gospel does also. Does man owe damnation to God, as he is God, as he is Creator, as he is lawgiver? or as man is man? No: God rather owes, and will pay, damnation to man for being sinful.

Therefore, that which Christ was properly to pay for his people, was that which was properly their debt, which they could not pay,—viz. obedience. And that the Scripture harps upon: “As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous^r.” “He became obedient unto death^s.” Now, what was Christ obedient to? To say, ‘To the wrath of God,’ were hardly sense: but, ‘To the will of God;’ which would prove and try him, and could do it thoroughly, without wrath.

^a Matt. iii. 17.

^r Rom. v. 19.

^s Phil. ii. 8.

It was the justice of God, that Christ was to satisfy : and if he could not have done that, then there would have been some reason he should have suffered his wrath. The justice of God challenged obedience of men, or no coming to heaven ; satisfaction for disobedience, or they must to hell. “ Here is enough (saith Christ) to serve for both ends :—they have disobeyed ; here is obedience more than all their disobediences do or can come to : they cannot obey as they should : here is that that makes it out,—viz. obedience infinite.”

III. The truth was, that Christ had to deal with the wrath of the devil, but not at all with the wrath of God. Consider but these passages, and see what was the stress, that Christ had to deal withal in his passion. First, that, Gen. iii. 15 ; “ ‘ He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel : ’—Satan, the seed of the woman shall destroy thee.” This is explained, Heb. ii. 14 : “ Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same ; that through death he might destroy him, that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”—And 1 John iii. 8 ; “ For this purpose the Son of God was manifest, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” And then observe that, John xiv. 30 ; “ The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” And Luke xxii. 53 ; “ ‘ When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me : but this is your hour, and the power of darkness ; ’ while I preached, there was a restraint upon you ; because my hour was not come : but now you and hell are let loose, to have your full swing against me.” There was a combat proposed in the sufferings of Christ, before God and angels. Betwixt whom,—Christ and the wrath of God ? No, but betwixt Christ and Satan, and all his power.—What doth God in this quarrel ? Doth God fight against Christ too, as well as the devil ? Was his wrath against him, as well as the devil’s wrath ? What, against his own champion, his own Son ? No ; he only tries him by affliction, not overwhelms him with his wrath. He only lets him alone to himself, to be the shock of Satan. He little assists Satan by his wrath laid on his own champion.

See the great mystery of this great dispensation in brief. God had created the first Adam, and endued him with abilities to have stood. Thus endued, he leaves him to stand of

himself, and permits Satan to tempt him; and he overcomes him, and all mankind are overthrown. God raised up a second Adam, endued with power to foil Satan, do he his worst: and not only with power to withstand Satan, if he will, but a will that could not but withstand Satan. He sets him forth to encounter, and leaves him to himself; lets Satan loose to do his worst. Satan vexeth him with all the vexation hell could inflict upon him. Did not God love his Son, look with dear bowels upon him all this while? It is a very harsh opinion to think, that Christ undertaking the combat for the honour of God against his arch-enemy,—that obeying the will of God even to the death,—that retaining his holiness unmoveable in the midst of all his tortures, paying God an infinite obedience;—it is harsh, I say, to think, that God should requite him with wrath, and look upon him as a wretched, damned person. No, it was the wrath of the devil, that Christ had to combat with, not the wrath of God at all.

IV. Though Christ is said to bear sins, yet for all that God did not look upon him any whit the more wrathfully, or in displeasure,—but rather the more favourably, because he would bear the sins of his people. For God looked on Christ not as a sinner, but as a sacrifice; and the Lord was not angry at him, but loved him, because he would become a sacrifice. “Therefore, doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life^t.” “Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great; and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death^u.” Do those words speak the anger of God? No, his well-pleasedness, his rewarding him for that he would be numbered with transgressors, being none, but a lamb without spot and blemish.

Some say, That Christ was the greatest sinner, murderer, &c. because he bare the sins of those that were so; which words border upon blasphemy, and speak, besides, a great deal of imprudence and inconsideration. See Lev. xvi. 21, 22: “And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities.” Is it not senseless now to say, That the goat was the greatest sinner in Israel? Was he any whit the more sinful, because the sins of the people

^t John, x. 17.

^u Isa. liii. 12.

were put upon him? And so of other sacrifices, on whose heads hands were laid, and sins put: was the wrath of God upon the sacrifice? No; the pleasure of God was upon it for atonement.

In such sense are those places to be taken: "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"^v:—"Who his ownself bare our sins, in his own body, on the tree"^w:—"He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin"^x." He bare our sins, not as a sinner, but as a sacrifice. And that John^y makes plain: "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world!" As a lamb at the temple bare the sins of the people,—so Christ bare our sins. How? was the lamb guilty or sinful? No; as an atonement and sacrifice. And so God looked on Christ as a sacrifice well pleasing to him, not as sinful at all.

Need we any more illustration? Observe that, Exod. xxviii. 36. 38; "And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it like the engravings of a signet, 'Holiness to the Lord.' And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts: and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord."—"Holiness to the Lord,' because he bare iniquity? It should rather have been 'unholiness,' if Aaron had been any whit the more sinful for bearing the people's iniquities. But, he is said to bear their iniquities, because he, by his office, undertook to atone for them. How did God look upon Aaron in his priesthood? With anger, because he bare the iniquity of the people? Nay, with favour and delight, as so excellent an instrument of atonement. Such another passage is that, Lev. x. 17, &c; "Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin-offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord?"

Let me ask those, that hold this opinion, two or three questions.

Was Christ so much as punished by God? Much less, then, was he overwhelmed by the wrath of God, damned by God. Was a lamb punished, that was sacrificed? He was afflicted, but not punished: for punishment argues a crime

^v Isa. liii. 6.

^w 1 Pet. ii. 24.

^x 2 Cor. v. 21.

^y John, i. 29.

or fault preceding; "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Were the sad sufferings of Christ laid on him as punishments? Certainly, not for his own sins: no, nor for ours neither. He suffered for our sins, bare our sins; but his sufferings were not punishments for our sins. For, observe two things: First, Christ merited by suffering. Is it good sense to say, 'he merited by being punished?' Strange sense! to say, 'he merited salvation for his by being punished for their sins;' but most divine! to say, 'by suffering for the redeeming of them.' He suffered as a sacrifice to atone, not as a sinner to be punished. Secondly, Did Christ die upon any debt to the law? Much less, upon any debt, that he owed to God's wrath. Did the law lay any thing to Christ's charge? did the law condemn him? And then can we dream of the wrath of God charging him, and damning him? It is true, that it is said^a, "Christ hath delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; as it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." But doth this mean, accursed of God? Was the good thief accursed of God, when he hung upon the cross? The meaning is, that he appeared so to the view of men.

So that, as it is impossible, that Christ should lie under the wrath of God for any fault of his own, so it is not imaginable, that he did for ours.

V. It is impossible, that Christ should suffer the torments of hell, or be in the case of the damned. A priest could not fall under the plague of leprosy: and yet, is the High-priest under a damned condition? Certainly, if his body could not see corruption, his soul could not feel damnation. If his body were not under that, which the bodies of the best saints fall under,—certainly his soul could not be under that, which damned souls fall under.

I might clear this by considering especially three things, which are the chief torments of hell:—1. Separation from God, without any glimpse of his favour. 2. Horror and hell in the conscience, because of guilt. 3. Utter despair. Now need I to show, that it was not possible, that any of these should seize upon Christ?

And these things be spoken to show, first, what is not the meaning of this article.

^z Lam. iii. 39.

^a Gal. iii. 13.

Now to come to the sense of the article. And for a beginning, I may say, as Moses does^b, “Would all the congregation were prophets!” So, would all the congregation were Grecians! for then this would be easy. The Creed was written in Greek: and in the interpretation of this article, we are not tied to the strictness of the English word, but we must fly for refuge to the sense of the Greek word. And if any of the opinions mentioned before, should urge, ‘It is hell, therefore must be so understood;’ as he said once, ‘To the law, and to the testimony;’ so I would answer, ‘To the original Greek, and to the propriety of the phrase there.’ In Isaiah^c, “The Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of *slumber*.” In the Greek, and in Rom. xi. 8, it is *κατανύξεως*, ‘*compunction*,’ clean contrary to the prophet’s meaning. What shall we do here? Not stick to the strict propriety of the Greek translation, but have refuge to the word in the original Hebrew, and construe the Greek word by that. So, in our English translation, ‘hell,’ seems to speak that, that is neither warrantable by Scripture nor reason: therefore, we must not stick to the strict propriety of the word, but to the Greek. In the Greek it is, *Κατῆλθεν εἰς Ἅδου* ‘He went down to Hades.’ Which I shall explain to you by and by.

I. The article refers to the passage of Christ’s soul after his death: I say, ‘of his soul;’ for what was done to his body, is specified in the articles before, “Crucified, dead, and buried.” But what became of his soul? *Κατῆλθεν εἰς Ἅδου* “He descended into hell.” Now this article is left out of divers confessions of faith in the fathers, and out of divers creeds. ‘Vice plurium,’ ‘instead of more,’ observe the Nicene creed; “Was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate: he suffered, and was buried: and, the third day, he rose again.” Which shows, it was added occasionally, and for some illustration. Councils and fathers commonly inserted some articles into confessions, to face some heresy then appearing. And this article was inserted to outface some error about Christ’s *person*. The heresies and mistakes about Christ’s person were numerous: and, among others this, was one,—that ‘he had not a real human body, but airy:’ and again,—that ‘though he had a real body, yet he had not a human soul, but that the Divine nature supplied the place of his soul.’

^b Num. xi. 29.

^c Isa. xxix. 10.

These articles that concern his death, outface both these. He had a real body; for he was really 'crucified, dead, and buried.' And a real soul; for when dead, 'he went to Hades.' Or whether it had been enough, to have said, 'He died and was buried:' but of him such addition was not needless, because of misconstruction.

II. The heathens owned another world, and the immortality of the soul: though they had no Bible to tell them it, yet they believed, that there was another world after this. Socrates discoursed of this before his death: which Cleombrotus reading, cast himself from a tower, that he might become immortal. A strange affectedness with this point, and a strong persuasion! It is a wonder the Sadducees, that had the Scriptures, should deny this; and Christians, that hear so much of it, be affected so little. Tully shows arguments, whereby they gathered, that men lived in another world: one of which was from the apparitions of some dead men. In which thing, while the devil went about to cozen them, to think them dead men, which indeed was his own appearing; yet he cozened himself too, while he taught them by it to believe a life after death. How they came thoroughly to be grounded in this point, I shall not insist upon to examine; but they did believe that there was another world after this, when the dead lived again.

III. This place and state they called *Hades*: that is, a place obscure, and invisible. The phrase is infinitely frequent. Achilles, "Αἶδι προΐαψεν, 'Sent him before to Hades.' Sophocles, Πρὶν εἰς "Αδου μολεῖν, 'Before the going to Hades.' Leonidas to his soldiers, Δειπνεῖν ἐν "Αδου, 'To sup in Hades:' that is, in another world. Shall I give you their character of Hades?

1. They thought it was a place under the earth. And the reason is, because they thought none went to heaven, but those that were to be gods: all others went to Hades. Hence Æneas and Ulysses went down into the earth, to the world of souls there, to confer with some dead friends. Hence the cheat of the devil, to bring ghosts as ascending out of the earth, 1 Sam. xxviii. 13.

2. This place of souls had two parts,—viz. Elysium and Tartarus: and those parted with a deep gulf of a deadly river; and that from one side they could see and talk to the other. According to this common opinion, Christ frames

his parable, Luke xvi. 23. He in Hades, in the place of torment, looks over the gulf, and talks with Abraham. So that both good and bad, when dead, went to Hades; the good, to the place of rest and delight,—the bad, to the place of sorrow and pain. So the Greek poet, Εἰς 'Αΐδου δύο τρίβους, &c. 'Both go to Hades,' &c. Lazarus went to Hades,—and so did the rich man too, but to contrary conditions.

IV. In this sense, then, is the article to be taken, as speaking according to the common notion, that Christ's soul went to Hades, to the other world, to the place where good souls went; which, Scripture hath taught us, is heaven.

The word 'hell' now is come to signify only the place of torment; but, of old, it signified larger, as the word Hades does; and by the Greek word, and its signification, we must construe it. Let me give you a word parallel. The word 'knave' is now taken only in a bad sense: of old it signified a 'servant.' So some old translations express, 'a servant of the Lord,' by 'a knave of the Lord.' When we read that, we do not construe it by the present sense of the word, but by the old, and by the original Hebrew. So when in this article we read the word 'hell,' we must not construe it according to our present common acceptation,—but, as of old it signified, 'the place and state of all souls departed.' And so, in this article, there are these three doctrines comprised:—

I. That Christ had a true human soul, like other men. Like to us he had a soul, that was reasonable, that enlivened the body, that was whole in it: and not the divinity, that enlivened and actuated his body.

II. That when Christ died, there was a real separation of soul and body, as it is with other men. The soul slept not with the body, but was separate from it. Though it was to come into the body again, yet it forsook the body, and was separate.

III. As soon as it was departed, it went into another world of souls; to a place where holy souls go,—viz. to heaven; and there continued, till it was to return to the body. It was in paradise all the while,—the body was in the grave.

Object. Is this the meaning of Acts ii. 27: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," or Hades? If Hades mean paradise, why should Christ pray against being left in Hades? "My flesh shall rest in hope," that it shall not be left in Hades:

and hopes he not, that his soul shall not be left in Hades, as he hopes his body shall not see corruption?

Ans. He doth not pray thus, as if it were not well with his soul in Hades, as to what it enjoyed, but that it was not well while separate from the body: for that it was, while Christ was under death. As if he should say, "Thou wilt not leave me under death, my soul in separation." This would be the triumph of the devil.

Observe, Christ's soul was in glory the while his body was in the grave; and yet desires to return to the body. Why? That he may finish the work of God by his resurrection, to conquer death. As I said, it is hell to the devil not to be doing evil,—so it is heaven to Christ, to do the will of God. He left the bosom of the Father to come into the world: and when his soul was in the bosom of his Father again in those joys, that are not expressible, yet it would rather do the work of God. Ask a soul there, Wouldest thou be on earth again? No.—But wouldest thou be on earth to do God service there? Yes; it is as heaven to be doing any thing for God. "Ubi imperator, ibi Roma:" "Where the emperor is, there is Rome:" so, wheresoever a man can please God, it is heaven to him. Here is the happiness of saints in heaven, that their will is wholly swallowed up in the will of God.

It is a question, where Lazarus's soul was, while he was four days dead. Why, undoubtedly no where, but in heaven. But the reason of the objection is, because it was but a wrong or misery to his soul, to send it from heaven again. Blessed soul, dost thou think so? No; any thing to obey the will of God.—So the soul of Christ was in glory, in the midst of unspeakable joys, yet he would not have it continue there, till the work of God was done. "Soul, thou art well; be content, keep in paradise still; let the body lie in the grave, it feels not hurt." "Ah! but all this while Satan, death, is not conquered; God's cause is not pleaded and finished; let that work first be done, and then both to glory."

That I speak to, and that that the article aims at, is, that Christ had a human soul like other men (but that not sinful), and that it departed as the souls of other men. Some, on Gen. i. 26, 27, "And God said, Let us make man in our image," say, 'God set Christ before him, and made man after the image of Christ;' as though they would say, 'God made

the first Adam in the image of the second;’ whereas we should say the contrary,—‘God made the second Adam in the image of the first.’ So, Phil. ii. 7, 8, “He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man,” &c. Not man at first created in the likeness of Christ; but Christ was brought into the world in the likeness of man.

And how Christ’s soul was like other men’s, I shall observe to you in three things:—I. In its infusion into the body. II. In its existence and acting in the body. III. In its going out of the body. Men saw his body like other men’s; and in these his soul showed itself like other men’s also.

I. By its infusion or induction into the body. But here you will say, the copy is darker, than to know what to write after it. It is controverted how souls are put into the body: and there are two mistakes about it,—viz. pre-existence, and generation; which this may rectify.

Some hold pre-existence of souls; that they were created at the beginning of the world, and put in at last into bodies. And they would argue from this reason, God finished creating ‘in principio,’ ‘in the beginning;’ therefore, he creates not a soul now. I answer, He finished creating ‘genera specierum,’ ‘the kinds of all species,’ but not ‘species generum,’ ‘the species of all kinds.’ When he brought frogs and lice on Egypt, it was a creation of the things; but the kind was created from the beginning. The same must be said of souls. Let Christ’s soul be the instance. Was the soul of the Messias created at the beginning? If so, what did it all the while, till it was united to the body? Where was it? What did it? Was Christ’s soul ever not acting for the good of his people? As soon as ever it was put into the body, it began the work of redemption; viz. Christ there sanctifying our nature, by the union of the human nature to the divine. His soul is now in heaven in the work of mediation for his people. It is hard to think, that his soul should be almost four thousand years in being, and doing nothing for men’s salvation. And we cannot call Christ Christ, till he be completed in our nature, soul and body. So that Christ’s soul, as ours, was infused by immediate creation in the body: which body was prepared in the womb for the receiving of it. So that though he was not like to us in regard of his be-

getting in the womb, yet he was like in the union of his soul to his body there. For,

II. Christ had a soul like ours in all things, sin excepted. It is a question, 'Whether all souls are equal.' There is some colour for it, Psal. xxxiii. 15; "He fashioneth their hearts alike;" and thence some argue the equality of souls. But I answer, 1. That place may be taken thus:—'That God alike is the Creator of all souls, rich and poor, wise and foolish.' 2. It is undoubted, all souls are alike in regard of the essentials of souls: they are all intellectual, spiritual, immortal; and in regard of their essential faculties. Whether they are alike as to the use and excellency of those faculties, I shall not dispute. Doubtless, Christ's soul was the most excellent; and yet like ours in all things, that simply relate to the essence of souls, or the human nature.

I need not speak of the essentials of a soul; he had the infirmities of a human soul,—viz. those that in themselves are sinless. I might so apply that, Isa. liii. 5; "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." He was subject to grief in soul; *Περίλυπος ψυχή*; "My soul is exceeding sorrowful^a:"—to fear; "in that he feared^b:"—"He groaned in spirit, and was troubled^c." These are natural infirmities or affections to human souls. Adam might have had these in innocency, if occasion offered.

The apostle makes comfortable use of this likeness of Christ's soul to ours^d; "For we have not a high-priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." And so may a Christian; in sadness, fear, hunger, persecution, he may refuge to a high-priest, that himself was sensible what these things were. "Haud ignara mali," &c. Oh! what access hath God given to sinners! Not only to one in their own nature, but that partook of the very infirmities of nature, except sin. Name but one that he had not. A poor man, dying, assaulted with Satan, fearing pains,—how comfortably may he refuge to Christ, who, by experience, knew all these.

II. He was like other souls, in the manner of his departure out of the body, and going to another world. And this I shall speak to in three particulars:—

^a Matt. xxvi. 38.

^b Heb. v. 7.

^c John, xi. 33.

^d Heb. iv. 15.

I. Although the reason of Christ's death was different from the reason of the death of all other men; yet, the nature and definition of Christ's death agrees withal. Though the conception and birth of Christ was different from all others, yet the nature of his death was not different:—the manner of dying, indeed, differed. That reached Christ as well as others: “It was appointed for him to die^e,” though upon a far different reason from what other men die. It is worth observing, that Christ's death was published, and pronounced of, before the death of Adam was denounced against him. In Gen. iii. 15, the death of Christ is mentioned; in ver. 19, the death of Adam. Which speaks, that Christ died, not of the plague of mortality, of which Adam and all his posterity die,—but that his death was upon another kind of account. Though Christ, the second Adam, was incomparably above the first in his innocence, in regard of the perfection of his nature and person; yet, in regard of the certainty of death, as I may say, he was beneath him. For the excellency of his nature, so far beyond him, that, whereas Adam was without sin, Christ was without possibility of sinning:—but, for certainty of dying, so far otherwise, that, whereas Adam might not have died, Christ could not but die.

Socinians say, ‘Adam was created mortal, because he was in a possibility to die, and because he died;’ whereas, indeed, actually he was created immortal, not as yet having any seeds or principles of mortality in his nature, sin not being yet come there. Christ was so much more without principles of mortality in him, as that whereas Adam was sinless, he could not sin; and yet, as I may say, he had the principles of dying in him; but, not so much in his body, as mind; not in any failing of nature, but in the holy bent of his own will. Death was not to him the wages of sin, as it is to others; nor to end sinning, as it is to others; but from clear contrary principles,—viz. love to man, and obedience to God. The death of Adam, and of all other men, proceeded from disobedience; the death of Christ only from obedience: the death of Adam, because he loved not himself, nor his seed; the death of Christ, because he loved his people more than himself. So that, as to the reason of the death of Christ, Jordan was driven back, the stream ran

^e In Heb. ix. 27.

a clean contrary way to the reason, why other men die; and yet, as to the nature and definition of his dying, it agreed with the nature of the dying of other men. For,

II. Define death; what is it? It is the separation of soul from body. Mortal, thou must once find this definition to be most true. The soul,—that that enliveneth the body,—that gives it freshness of colour, warmth, life, and motion; when the soul is departed, all these are gone, and the body dead. Here is the difference betwixt death, and a swoon, or trance. God showed in Enoch and Elias, what he would have done, if man had continued innocent,—viz. have translated body and soul to glory. But, when sin came in,—death came in, and soul and body must be parted,—the body, to corruption,—the soul, into the world of souls,—to be disposed of according to its sinfulness or goodness.

But why should God thus dispose, as to the taking men out of this world? Why not the wicked, soul and body to hell, and no more ado? And why not the holy, soul and body to heaven? I might say, that Simeon and Levi, that have been brethren in evil, might be scattered in Jacob, that they conspire evil no more. That soul and body, that have been compartners in sinning, might be severed from conjoining to sin any more. But what need we say more, than that God hath thus sentenced upon sin, that the body, that was created immortal, should die, and see corruption; and that soul and body, that were in the nearest conjunction in this world, should be disunited, and the bonds of life dissolved, and soul and body parted into two several regions. Oh! how bitter is this parting! how dreadful the very thought of it to most in the world! Why, Christ did as really undergo this separation in his death, as any other whatsoever.

Observable is the expiring of Christ upon his cross, both in regard of the thing itself, and of the manner of it. Comparing the evangelists together, we shall see it the better. St. John seems to make “it is finished,” his last words^f; St. Luke, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit^g;” and add but the construction that the centurion makes, upon his crying out^h, “Truly, this was the Son of God.” They all say in our English, “He gave up the ghost:” which two

^f John, xix. 30.

^g Luke, xxiii. 46.

^h Mark, xv. 39.

of them,—viz. Mark and Luke,—express, ἐξέπνευσε, “He breathed out his spirit,” according as other dying persons do. But Matthew and John have expressions very feeling. Matthew, Ἀφῆκε τὸ πνεῦμα “He let go his spirit,” or his soul. And John, Παρέδωκε, “He delivered it up.” Christ could not die, nay, I may say, he would not die, till all things were fulfilled, that were written concerning his death. Therefore, when he had hung above three hours, and knowing it was written, “They gave me vinegar,” &c. he said, “I thirst.” He tastes, and finds it vinegar, and says, “It is finished,” now all is accomplished; so he bows his head, and composeth himself to die, and cries, “Father, into thy hands,” &c: and, having so said, he ‘let go’ his soul, and ‘delivered’ it up into the hands of God.

Remember that, John x. 17, 18, and you see the sense of these expressions. “I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” He had life in his own hand, and the Jews could not take it from him; but he let it go himself, and delivered it up. “When the centurion saw, that he thus cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, ‘Surely, this man was the Son of God!’” Doubtless this man hath the disposal of his own life. So strong a cry is not the cry of one that is spent, and dying through weakness and fainting, but it argues life, strong and vigorous, to be still in him; and, therefore, he dies, not of weakness, but gives up his life at his own pleasure.

Shall we pass this great passage of our Saviour without a meditation? Mortal men and women, if your lives and souls were so at your own disposal, could you so readily, so willingly, part with them, and give them up to God? They are not; and time is a coming, when we must part with them, whether we will or no. Our Saviour hath taught us what to do, against they be called for, to get them in readiness; to be comfortably willing to part with them, and give them up into his hands. I remember that passage of a good man dying, “Egredere, anima; quid times,” &c: “Go, soul, depart; why art thou afraid?” Thou hast served a good Master; be not afraid to go to him.—It will be a hard pull to have the soul and body parted. We had need to be getting the soul loosened, that when God calls, it may not be un-

willing, and hang on, and stick, and be loath to go. It was a hard perplexity with him, that cried out, "Animula, vagula, blandula," &c: "Ah! poor soul, thou must go; and whither art thou to go? To leave all thy worldly pleasures and delights, and must away, thou knowest not whither."

The hard and dreary parting is, when the soul is chained to the world, as well as to the body: when it sticks to these things, as well as to the body; and must be torn from all these too. He that is dead to the world, how easy, how comfortable, is it for that man to die! When he dies, he hath nothing else to do, but to resign his soul to him that gave it.

So that, though the manner of Christ's parting soul and body was extraordinary, yet his soul and body were as really parted at his death, as other men's are.

III. His soul, thus parted from his body, went to Hades, into another world, to the place whither holy souls go after death; which himself expresseth in those words to the good thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

What does a soul instantly after its departure? Some say, walks the regions of air, and sees the secrets of nature there. But souls go not into another world to study, but to receive rewards. And I may say of any soul departed, as Christ of Peterⁱ, "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst, whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." So, when the soul was in the body, it went whither it would,—moved the body, whither it thought good,—did what it pleased,—was at its own pleasure; but now, being departed, another hath girded it; and, if it be an evil soul, he carries it whither it would not: if even the best soul, he hath fixed it, that it is not at its own liberty, as it was before.

The other world is the fixing of souls in their place and condition, that they flit no more, change no more: that as the soul, then, is not in a mutable condition, as it is here, so not in a self-moving condition, as here. Observe that, Eccles. xii. 7; "Then shall the dust return to the earth, as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God, who gave it." A good soul returns to God; and a bad soul too returns to God,

ⁱ John, xxi. 18.

that gave it: both return to God. How? Now they come entirely into God's hands, to be disposed of according to what was done by them in the flesh; and he instantly disposeth them into heaven or hell. That is the very day of retribution.—“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried. And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment^k,” &c. Both suddenly disposed of; the one, to heaven,—the other, to hell. So we may take example from the two thieves on the cross: the good thief went presently to paradise,—and the bad, to his place: and both these to Hades,—the word in the Creed.

Christ commends his soul into his Father's hands, and it went into the hands of God. What to do? For God to dispose of it.—And how think you God would dispose of the soul of Christ? The schools question, whether Christ merited salvation ‘pro se,’ ‘for himself:’ because the reason of the question is, whether he set himself to merit ‘pro se?’ Did he, or did he not,—the soul of Christ, after so holy a life and death, could not but go to salvation. For what had the soul of Christ now to do more towards man's salvation? and what could be done more towards its own? Now having done all this, what had the soul of Christ to do more, but to go to its rest, till it be put again into its body for the raising of that. As the Scripture tells us, holy souls go to rest, till, at the last day, they must meet their bodies; and then both shall rest together.

This passage of our Saviour's soul to heaven upon his death, is called his going to Hades, the world of souls, and the place of holy souls,—a place invisible to mortal eyes: which though it seems harshly expressed, ‘He descended into hell;’ yet must be interpreted from the Greek expression, in this sense.

And the phrase in the Greek teacheth, that the soul sleepeth not with the body; stayeth not here on earth, where the body doth; but hath a life, when the body is dead, and goeth into another world to have a living or dying life. Christ's soul to be separate but thirty-six hours; and yet it doth not stay and sleep with the body, but takes wing, and flies into another world. The Sadducee, that thought the soul died with the body, little considered what the nature of

^k Luke, xvi. 22, 23.

the soul was. Christian, dost thou consider it? Dost thou know what it is?—No, I cannot see it.—But I may say, as it is, Rom. i. 20; “The invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.” So the invisible things of the soul, i. e. its spiritualness and immortality, may be seen by the things it acts. “The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord¹.” It is the Lord’s candle, like that in the tabernacle, that never went out, but was dressed morning and evening, and kept burning continually. It is the Lord’s candle, “searching all the inward parts of the belly;” that is able to acquaint man with himself, with his conscience, his thoughts, affections. A candle that searcheth the things of nature, looketh into the things of God.

Compare this spirit with the spirit of a beast, a swine, an ox; the acting of the soul of man in wisdom, learning, contrivance, with the acting of a brute; and then guess what is the nature of the soul. And if it be so active in the body, when fettered in flesh,—what think you it will be, when loosed out?

And that it will be one day, and go into another world: not to be at its own liberty there: but it goes to God to dispose of it, and so he doth to heaven or hell. Go away then with this meditation in thy bosom, and keep it there,—‘My soul must certainly one day go into the hands of God, to receive her due reward.’

¹ Prov. xx. 27.

II^m.

I believe in the holy Catholic Church.

AFTER the Creed hath done with what is to be believed concerning God, it comes to speak of what is to be believed concerning other matters of faith. It teacheth the Trinity, and that we are to believe in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and most largely what to believe concerning the Son, his incarnation and acting for man's redemption.

After mention of faith in the Trinity, "I believe in God the Father; in his Son Jesus Christ; and I believe in the Holy Ghost;" it first comes to teach what to believe concerning the church, and that in this article: "I believe in the holy Catholic church."

A Papist's faith upon this article comes to this,—*"Credo in ecclesiam sanctam Romanam Catholicam;"* i. e. "I believe in the holy Roman Catholic church." In which they speak impiety, to believe in men; falsehood, to call the Roman church 'holy;' and nonsense, to call that particular church the church 'Catholic,' or universal.

I shall not insist to confute their belief in this point; the first part whereof is so plainly confuted by Scripture, that bids not to trust in man; the second, by experience and history, that tells of the abominable unholiness of the Roman church; and the third, by all reason and common language, that tells it nonsense, to call a particular church the church universal.

I shall first unfold to you the article, and then speak to what is observable upon the meaning and intent of it.

The church, you see, is made the object of faith in it. But of what faith, and in what sense, the articles following show: viz. To believe, that there is a 'holy Catholic church,' as that there is a 'communion of saints;' that there is 'forgiveness of sins,' &c.

In the article are three things to be believed:—

I. That there is a church of God.

II. That it is Catholic.

III. That it is holy.

^m Omitted in the English folio-edition. See Strype's "Genuine Remains of Lightfoot," p. 235.

The hardest thing is, what is meant by 'Catholic;' and it is not easy to say, how there is a 'holy' church, when there is so much wickedness and abomination in the world. It is said by the Psalmist^m, "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek after God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good; no, not one." And where, then, can you find a holy church? The apostle Paul saithⁿ, "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." And John saith^o, "The whole world lieth in wickedness." And where can you, then, find a holy church? Diogenes searched the city throughout with a candle at noon-day, and said, "Hominem quæro," "I seek for a man." So search Jerusalem with a candle; and how rarely can we find one that is holy! And where, then, is the holy Catholic church?

First, As to the word 'Catholic,' it signifies 'universal.' It is rendered 'General' in the titles of the Epistles of James, Peter, and John. And those are called 'General Epistles,' because not written to particular persons, cities, or countries, (as those to Timothy, the Romans, the Galatians, &c.) but generally to all, in many or all countries. As St. Peter to the strangers in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; St. James to the twelve tribes, wheresoever scattered. So the 'Catholic' church is first meant in opposition to the 'particular' church of the Jews; and secondly, as meaning the church of the Gentiles, of all nations, that truly profess Christ throughout the world.

The Jews under the law cried, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these." So since the gospel even hitherto, they cry, "The church of God are we." But the Scripture tells us, they are a 'synagogue of Satan.' And Scripture teacheth us to acknowledge a Catholic church, the church of God abroad in the world among all nations at one time or other.

We shall take up the words particularly and single. And, first, of the word 'church.' And the article doth teach and call upon us to believe, that 'God hath, ever, a church in the world.'

I shall not insist upon the signification of the word in Greek and Latin; nor of the deduction of it into our Eng-

^m Psal. xiv. 2, 3.

ⁿ Phil. ii. 21.

^o 1 Ep. v. 19.

lish tongue. Some think our English is derived from the Greek word *Κυριακή*, which signifies, ‘belonging to the Lord:’ as *Κυριακὸν δεῖπνον*, ‘the Lord’s supper^p;’ and *Κυριακή ἡμέρα*, ‘the Lord’s day^q.’ So *κυριακή*, or ‘church,’ to mean ‘the Lord’s portion;’ as Israel is called by that title very oft.

There is none of you, I suppose, but know what is meant by ‘the church of God;’ viz. those, or that company, that worship and serve God throughout the world.

About the definition or description of the church of God, is now, and hath been almost ever, under the gospel, the greatest controversy, one of them, in religion. As at present, whether the Roman church be a true church:—which many Protestants deny. And whether the Protestant church be a true church: which the Romanists deny. Whether the church of England be a true church: which Separatists deny. Whether Separatists be of the true church: which the church of England denies. The like scruple is made of the Greek, Russian, Jacobin, Abyssin, and other churches. Into which controversy I shall not enter. We are upon catechistical method to instruct the ignorant in the necessary points of religion. And according to that task, I shall speak only to that, which is plain, undeniable, and necessary.

I. God hath ever had a church since the beginning, and will have to the end of the world. As the cherubins’ wings touched both sides of the house of the Lord, and met in the middle; so the church touches both ends of the world, beginning and end, and continues all along the space between. No generation, in which there have not been some, that truly professed the name of God, and belonged to him. For we may take that for a handsome definition of the church^r: “The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his; and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.” It is a people that belong to God, call on the name of God, and depart from iniquity. I might trace in Scripture the footsteps of such a people and church from generation to generation, from Adam to Christ. But let the apostle do it for me, Heb. xi. But how can we trace it from Christ to these times? This is the great question of the Papists, ‘Where

^p 1 Cor. xi. 20.

^q Rev. i. 10.

^r 2 Tim. ii. 19.

was your church before Luther?" How is it possible to trace religion and the church from Christ hitherto, but in the church of Rome?

Why, that there hath been a true church ever since Christ, and will be to the end of the world, Christ hath assured us by that, Matt. xvi. 18: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And to that reflecteth that, 2 Tim. ii. 19; "The foundation of God standeth sure;" not to be shaken down, not to be brought to nothing. And that speaketh to the same tenor, that Christ's kingdom should be everlasting, and have no end; Dan. ii. 44: "Which shall never be destroyed." And Psal. cxlv. 13: "Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." It is to endure throughout all generations: no generation to be, in which is not some part of that kingdom.

II. But, for clearing, we must distinguish betwixt the church visible and invisible, known of God, and seen of men. The apostle makes this distinction, 1 Cor. i. 2: "To the church of God, which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that, in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ."—"Sanctified" and "called to be saints" differ from all that profess and take on them to "call on the name of Christ."—Psal. lxxxiii. 3: "They have consulted against thine hidden ones:" *hidden* from the eyes of men; that men do not know, nor own them for the people of God, but he knows and sees them.—2 Tim. ii. 19: "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth those that are his." They are under seal, as a sealed letter, which men cannot read: as a sealed treasure, which men cannot see. But "God knows those, that are his."

First; We must say, 'God hath ever had a church;' but cannot say 'he hath ever had a visible church.' "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works. There is none that doth good^u," &c. Where was then a visible church? Yet there was then a church: "Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, who eat up *my people*, as they eat bread^v?" There was a people of God; but the wicked would devour them, and eat them up. Look before the flood; Gen. vi. 12, "And

^u Psal. xiv. 1—3.

^v Ver. 4.

God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.” Where was a visible church? See ver. 9: “These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations; and Noah walked with God.” There was a poor handful in the family of Noah, known of God, but despised of men.

Look among Israel in Egypt. Where would you look for a church but among them? Yet see Ezek. xx. 7, 8: “Then I said unto them, Cast ye away, every man, the abomination of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt. But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of his eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt.” Where was a visible church then, when the nation generally followed the idols of Egypt? Yet God had then his invisible church,—Kohath, Amram, Aaron, Moses, &c.

One for all; 1 Kings xix. 14. 18: “I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left.” “Yet, saith God, I have left me seven thousand in Israel,” &c. Elias was quick-sighted to have observed one, that served God, and one that did not; and yet he did not see one, that did, but himself. Yet God had seven thousand of his hidden ones; “knees, that had not bowed to Baal,—and mouths, that had not kissed him.”

Secondly; There is no salvation out of the church, but there may be salvation out of the visible church. As multitudes, that are in the visible church, are not saved,—so some out of it may be saved. I speak not this to encourage any to neglect being of the visible church, but to show the necessity of the distinction we are upon, as to the right stating the notion of the church in point of conscience.

On one hand there are some in the visible church, that are more abominable than ever were the heathen. Are there not some of the church of England, or Holland, that will be called Christians, that are as abominable atheists, drunkards, whoremongers, as ever were any of the heathen? Of such kind of Christians the apostle complained^w; “But

^w 1 Cor. v. 11.

now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man, that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one, no, not to eat." Implying, that there were some, called a 'brother,' a Christian, yet a fornicator, &c; and one that was not fit to be companied withal. And Phil. iii. 18, 19; "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame; who mind earthly things." And Tit. i. 16; "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him; being abominable and disobedient, and, to every good work, reprobate."

Is not the greatest company in any visible church either such open profane or careless Christians, or downright hypocrites? Are there not ten, a hundred, of such for one, that truly fears God? Well, when we speak of the holy Catholic church, can we only think of that which is visible, as to an outward profession, in which millions perish, and go to hell for ever? No, we are to think of the church invisible; the number known to God of his faithful ones.

And on the other hand, as a man may be in the visible church, and yet not be saved: so possibly a man may be out of the visible church, and yet may be saved. An infant, not yet baptized, is not yet admitted into the visible church; but it were hard to say, all so dying were not saved. David's child, not circumcised, died; and yet who doubts of his salvation? Consider David's demeanour upon his death, and compare it with the demeanour of him, upon the death of Absalom, 2 Sam. xviii. 33: "The king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" This for Absalom. But for his infant, 2 Sam. xii. 18: "David's servants feared to tell him, that the child was dead. For they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice; how will he then vex himself, if we tell him, that the child is dead?" But how well he took it, see ver. 23: "Now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." He could not but doubt Absalom's condition, because he died

in rebellion. But had he doubted so of the child's condition, could he have been so well a-paid upon his death? Had he been of Popish faith, to believe that children are not saved, that receive not the sign of admission into the church, could he have been so well satisfied?

And in another case; a good man may possibly die excommunicate out of the visible church. It were hard to conclude such a man's damnation merely upon that reason. John ix. 34: the Jews there cast out a man for arguing that Christ must be a true prophet, because he cured him, who had been born blind. And, ver. 22, "The Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." And Christ told the disciples, that they should be cast out of the synagogue. If they died in that excommunication out of that visible church, did that prove their damnation? How many holy men have died excommunicate out of the church of Rome? Which so little argues their damnation, that it rather argues the contrary. Nay, it may come to pass, that a good man may die excommunicate out of a true Protestant church, neither for heresy nor impiety; and yet it were hard to doom such a one to perdition.

I speak not this to animate any to separate or withdraw from the visible church, wherein we live: for such divisions of Reuben there are sad thoughts of heart: but that by observing this needful distinction, you may the better observe the intent of this article.

Learn, then, this distinction of visible and invisible. As the apostle hath it, "All are not Israel, that are of Israel:" so all are not the church of God, that are of the church visible. As we may say, Every minister is not a minister, every soldier is not a soldier.

And let this be thy meditation upon this article;—God hath a holy church, that serve him truly, whom the world cannot discern: and I must get to be of that number; or this my profession will be greater damnation.

This needful distinction will help to answer that cavil of Papists, 'Where was your church before Luther?' *Answer*, God saw his own, that professed his truth, in the midst of Popery. As there was a Lot in Sodom, and seven thousand that bowed not to Baal.

This also will afford an answer to that reproachful cavil,

‘Do you think your ancestors were damned, that lived in Popery?’ And they think, they have us in a strait by this argument. But we may answer, It is not for us to judge. God hath his, whom men cannot discern. I doubt not, but that many were in the Popish church, that were not of it.

The Papists, indeed, brag of the visibility of their church. They will have it a city on a hill; a candle on a candlestick^s, &c; and make a puff at the Protestant church, because it was not visible two hundred years ago; and their church hath been a thousand years. They tell us we had had no Scriptures, had not their church preserved them; no ordination of ministers, had it not been conveyed all along in their church. And such things as these they vapour, as if there could be no true church but theirs, which hath been visible in all ages.

I remember a story; When one had proclaimed a king with a world of titles, the king of France made his herald proclaim him nothing but ‘King of France,’ ‘King of France,’ divers times over; accounting more dignity in that one title, than in all the others. The church of Rome proclaims herself pompously in her arrogated titles, that she, she is the mother church, the holy church, the Catholic church, the only church, and I know not what. The Protestant church need to say of herself no more, than that she is ‘the church of God.’ The other brags of antiquity, universality, visibility, succession, and other bravadoes; whereas the Protestant church hath but this to glory of (and it is enough), That she is built upon the prophets and apostles. Ingenious was that picture: in one scale you see all the trinklements of Popery, and the pope and friars hanging on; in the other, the Protestants put the Bible, and it outweighs. This is the glory and sure friend of a church, to be built upon the Holy Scriptures, although there be no visibility of that church to the eyes of men at all.

But that we may take up the consideration of this thing the better, and that we may see how needful it is to take the distinction proposed,—observe these things.

It is true, the church of Rome, if a church, hath been visible a thousand years and more, when no Protestant church was to be seen. So the world was visibly of one religion two

^s Matt. v, 14, 15.

thousand years,—viz. irreligious heathenism ; when, but only in one spot of ground, one that served the true God, was not to be found. Abraham in Chaldea, when he first hearkened to God,—how might this Romish argument have been used against him ? “What ! thou only of all the world not worship gods of gold and silver ? Look through Europe, Asia, and Africa, and thou wilt not find one of thy mind.” Was Abraham’s religion ever the worse for being so lonely ; or the other the better for being so universal ? Micaiah, and the false prophets of Ahab ; he, one,—they, hundreds : were their words ever the truer for their multitudes ?

It is true, that, for some hundreds of years, all this western world was Popish,—Italy, Spain, France, England, Germany ; and no religion visible in all these countries but Popery. The name of Protestant not owned ; the Protestant religion not to be seen : ‘And where was then your religion,’ say the Papists to us ? To whom, to give a full answer, let us compound these three or four things together :—We must tell them, or else we speak not as the truth is, that the Popish religion was far from being the true religion, and the Popish church from being the true church, all that time, or from ever being so.

I shall not insist upon many arguments to prove this. I shall only give you one argument from a scriptural reason, and one consideration of a scriptural expression.

The argument from a scriptural reason is this : that church that is built more on traditions and doctrines of men, than on the word of God, is no true church, nor religion. But the church of Rome is built more upon traditions and doctrines of men, than on the word of God. Ergo, the foundation of the true church of God is Scripture : “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.” But if you look upon what the whole frame of Popery is built, you will find it upon a sand of human tradition : that the pope is head of the church ; that he pardons sin ; rules over princes : where find you this in Scripture ? They are but points of the cursed inventions of men : That priests can sing souls out of purgatory ; that the service of God should be in an unknown tongue ; that the priests can change the bread into a God ; and generally the whole rabble of their Romish religion hath not so much as any one under-

pinning of scripture-warrant, but all founded upon the rotten trash of human inventions, and self ends.

The scriptural expression to be considered is that title of Rome, Rev. xvii. 5; “*Mystery*, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.” For that it speaks of Rome, is plain, ver. 18; “The woman which thou sawest, is the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” And described even as the Roman writers themselves do describe her, ver. 9; “The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.” She is styled, ‘Mystery,’ ‘Babylon.’ She was ‘a mystery of iniquity;’ ‘Babylon,’ while she takes upon her Sion; ‘mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth,’ when she takes upon her to be mother of all churches, and the only spouse of Christ in the world: a Jezebel², that takes on her to be a prophetess, but is a seducer.

And ‘mysterious’ is the providence of God, in permitting such a deceiver, that should seduce all the western world with a general seduction. It is observed, that Popery and Mahometism rose together; one overwhelmed all the east,—the other, the west. Where had been glorious churches, there this smoke of the bottomless pit clouded and darkened all. And it is observable, that wheresoever the gospel had been, these two came and spoiled all. And Popery the more abominable than the other, because, under the name of Christ and the gospel, it led men from Christ and the gospel. We may say, upon thoughts of both, as it is Rev. xvi. 5; “Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.” Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, it was just with thee, righteous God, to “send them strong delusions, that they might believe a lie: that they all might be damned, that believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness³.”

So that to question, where was the church of God before Luther, we must answer,—

1. That the Roman church was not it; for that was but Babylon, the mystery of iniquity, the plague of God upon the world for not receiving the love of divine truth.

2. Wheresoever there were any in that time, that kept to the truth of God, they were the church of God. “Ubi

² As Rev. ii. 20.

³ 2 Thess. ii. 10—12.

imperator, ibi Roma." So wheresoever the true profession of the truth was, there the church was. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." The seven thousand, that worshipped not Baal, were the true church.

I shall not insist to show, that, even in the thickest and darkest times of Popery, there were other churches in the world, that were not infected with that plague,—as the Grecians, Abyssines, &c. But even stories do show, that, even within the compass of the Popish church, there were some in all ages, that held to the truth of God, and abominated the wickedness and delusions of the church. But if any such could not be named, yet God never left himself without witness; and it hath ever been the glorious providence of God to preserve a Noah in a wicked old world, a Lot in Sodom, an Abraham in an idolatrous Chaldea, a Job in heathen Arabia, and a Jeremiah in a most wicked Jerusalem; a church to himself in the worst times.

But observe, that the church of God is the least part of the world, and so the least part of the visible church. We must distinguish the church in opposition to the world, and in opposition to hypocrites, and carnal gospellers: so the Scripture nameth 'saints' in opposition to the 'heathen,' and in opposition to 'unholy Christians.' Now take the word in this latter sense, which is the most proper, and the true church of God is the least part of the church. I deny not, that the church of England, Scotland, and Ireland, is a true church of God, in regard of outward profession. But there are multitudes in these, that are not the true church, in regard of sincere profession, but profane hypocrites, cast-aways. Imagine a great parish or congregation, that meet together; and in the church hear and wait on the ordinances, and have the word and ordinances truly administered. They attend upon them in outward attendance, but, out of the church, are profane and ungodly. We cannot but say, here is a church in opposition to the heathen; a true church in opposition to a false, where the ordinances are not rightly administered. Yet we cannot say, 'this is a true and sincere church of God;' because they do but outwardly profess, and not at all practise.

So Israel professed, went to the temple^b, had ordinances

^b Isa. i.

rightly administered. This was a true church so far. But they lied, swore falsely, committed adultery, oppressed the innocent, and such-like. Can we then say, they were a true church of God? See that Eph. v. 25—27: “Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish.” Let us take up all these particulars.

1. “Christ loved his church, and gave himself for it.” What, for all that make an outward profession? adulterers, fornicators, drunkards, and the like? Doth he love such? Doth he give himself for such? Many and many better professors shall be refused of Christ at the great day; because they were not sincere in their profession, though not so abominable in conversation. “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many marvellous works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity^c.” We cannot think, that such were so abominable in their conversation; but Christ found they were not sincere in profession. The foolish virgins,—we cannot imagine that they were whores; for they were virgins: or that they were abominable in their lives; but they were foolish, drowsy, and negligent. Now, if Christ is so far from owning such, as are so fair-carriaged, think you he owns, loves, and gave himself for, horrid wretches, that despise him?

2. The true church is “cleansed, sanctified, without spot or wrinkle.” Look on the most, nay, almost all, in the visible church, that make an outward profession; and do they carry such a mark? How few are there, upon whose conversation is ‘holiness to the Lord?’ “They profess that they know God; but in works deny him^d.” At Christ’s table there was one devil to eleven saints; in the visible church, it is well if there be one saint to many devils. ‘One of a city, and two of a tribe;’ like a few berries after beating the olive-tree.

I may use the style of Eliphaz, “Hast thou marked the old way, which wicked men have trodden^e?” Mark the way

^c Matt. vii. 22, 23.

^d Tit. i. 16.

^e Job, xxii. 15.

of the world, which most men walk in : observe how unsuitable it is to the gospel, to the example of Christ, and the discharge of a good conscience ; and then look upon these marks of the true church of God : and then judge whether it be not true, that the church of God is the least part of the world, and the least part of the church visible. Our Saviour asserts the former in “ Fear not, little flock,” &c : also the latter, in “ many are called, but few are chosen :” many in outward profession, in the visible church, but few truly the church of God.

And so we may answer that cavil of the Papists we spake of before, ‘ Where was your religion all the time of Popery ?’ Answer,—“ In the Scripture.” Had a Jew questioned a heathen at his first conversion, ‘ Where was your religion heretofore,’—he might have answered, ‘ In the Scriptures.’ We profess nothing but what is in the Scripture ; as “ saying none other things than those, which the prophets and Moses did say should come^f.” But where was our church ? It was ; but invisible. Some there were, that worshipped God according to Scripture ; that he saw and knew, though invisible and unknown to men.

That, then, that we are to believe in this article, is,

I. That God ordinarily hath had, hath, and will have, a visible church, for the glorifying of his word and name. But,

II. Though the church be not visible, yet God hath always some that belong to him, and serve him. And this is the church of God, though not to be discerned of men.

These most properly are the church, as ‘ ecclesia’ signifies ; that is, ‘ called out.’ A people called out of the world ; though in the world, yet called out of it, so that they are not of it : called off from the course, way, doings, of the world, as it were into another climate. “ Many are called ;” that is, have the call held out to them, but they follow it not ; called *to*, but not called *out*. But these, as the apostles did, follow the call of Christ, and forsake the world. “ Called to be saints ;” and they become saints, or holy.

Now, for farther explication and illustration of this article, I shall descend to inquire into two questions :—

I. Whether every Christian, who is bound to believe, that there is a church,—is bound also to believe, that he is of this church.

^f Acts, xxvi. 22.

II. How far Christians are obliged to believe the church; that is, councils, synods, or primitive fathers.

I. Whether every Christian is bound to believe, that he is of this church.—For certainly it seems strange for men to believe as standers by only, as if they were not concerned in the thing believed. I believe that there is a holy chosen number to be saved; that God delights in them; that they faithfully serve him; and that they have communion with God, forgiveness of their sins. But what is all this to thee? What art thou the better for it? And, therefore, certainly the article hath farther aim, than to intend only a bare belief. But doth it reach to this, ‘I believe I am of this number?’

To proceed gradually, first let me observe two things by the way:—

1. That nothing is to be believed as a necessary point of faith, but it concerns the soul; therefore, believing of it must be to benefit the soul. “Corde creditur ad justitiam:” “With the heart, man believeth to righteousness.” It is not all, to believe the thing is true; but farther to believe so, as the soul may have advantage. Take an instance: one of the first things in religion to be believed is, ‘That the Scriptures are the word of God, and divinely true.’ This, who believes not? The devil himself cannot deny it: nay, he cited Scripture, as the word of God, to our Saviour. And there are thousands in hell, that never made doubt of this. Therefore, the believing of this must have a farther reach, that the soul may receive benefit upon so believing.

2. The believing the needful points of religion is not an act of the understanding only, but of the will and conscience also. It is a question, “Whether faith be an act of the understanding, or will:” and it is concluded of both, especially the latter. I believe that there was a Julius Cæsar, an Alexander Magnus. Here is only an act of the understanding, because I have no more to do with it, but only to believe it. But I believe, that Christ was born, died, rose again; that there is forgiveness of sins; that there is a God, a heaven, a day of judgment. And in reference to these, I have something more to do, than barely to satisfy my understanding, that the things are true. For I have to work my will and affections upon my belief, that my soul may be benefited to eternity.

These things premised, let us apply to the thing in hand.

Then I am not only barely to believe that there is a church, but my soul is to be working upon this belief for its good; to be affected in heart according to the import of the thing believed:—and this may be upon a twofold reflection. When I say, ‘I believe a holy Catholic church,’ that there is always a company of holy men, that truly fear God,—‘sursum corda;’ then ‘lift up your hearts.’

First, To be affected with the goodness and good providence of God, that picketh out, and preserveth, such a company to himself. Not to think of the church on earth, but to have such a thought also towards heaven; hereat to observe, admire, and be affected with, God’s wonderful goodness in that regard. Such are the apostle’s thoughts upon the thoughts of the church: he looks on the church of Corinth, once such a people as he describes, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, “fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners:” but now “washed, sanctified, justified.” And where are his thoughts? Up towards God. “I thank God always on your behalf for the grace of God, which is given you^g.” So he looks on the church of the Ephesians^h, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings,” &c. So on that of the Philippiansⁱ; “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.” And so to the Thessalonians^j; “We give thanks to God always for you all.” And so should a Christian, pressly thinking of the church of God, have his heart in heaven, blessing the infinite goodness, for choosing and preserving such a people to himself: in the inundation of sin and damnation, to pick out a number for himself, to escape sin and damnation; and in all the tumblings and storms of the world, to keep a church undrowned, and overwhelmed; a handful in Noah’s ark in the midst of the deluge of sin and troubles.

Secondly, To be affected with the condition and estate of the members of the church. He, that truly knows that and them, cannot but take up that of the Psalmist: “Happy are the people, that are in such a case; yea, happy is that people, who have the Lord for their God^k.”

When you rehearse this, “The holy Catholic church,” in

^g 1 Cor. i. 4.

^h Chap. i. 3.

ⁱ Chap. i. 3.

^j 2 Thess. i. 2.

^k Psal. cxliv. 15.

the Creed,—let your thoughts first recoil to your Bibles, and see how the Holy Ghost pictures them there. “The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold^l.” “And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my jewels^m.” Then that, “They have consulted against thy hidden onesⁿ.” They are the treasure of the Lord’s cabinet, laid up with him, though not minded of men. Nay, yet the divine limner lays on more precious colours: “I have called you friends^o:” nay, “partakers of the divine nature^p:” nay, farther, “We are the sons of God^q.” And that is not all, but more, if more may be, “We shall be like to himself.”

Now, Christian, when thou repeatest this article, write this exposition of the word ‘church,’ in the margin;—These are the Lord’s precious ones, his jewels, his friends, his sons, his own similitude: these are his delight, his portion, his chosen, and the very ‘apple of his own eye^r.’ And art thou not affected with their happy condition; and affected for thine own soul’s interest? “I believe the holy Catholic church;” that is, such a happy, blessed, glorious company; and dost thou not stir, O my soul? No life, no holy emulation, no striving, to be like to these? A poor miserable beggar sees the wealth and bravery of the great ones, and he may haply envy it; but he cannot emulate or hope to equal it. But God hath shewn thee a way, that thou mayest be like to these, and partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light: and art thou not moved?

Alexander weeps, because he was not so famous as Achilles; Julius Cæsar, because not so famous as Alexander. And hast thou not a holy emulation in thee, O Christian? Such and such, holy, blessed, dear to God; and hast thou no emulation to be so too? Ponder but that title, ‘friend of Christ;’ and that title, ‘child of God:’ and do we profess Christ and God, and are we not moved at it? To be a ‘child of God,’ carried in the bosom of his dearest affections: to be a ‘friend of Christ,’ always in his tender affections and remembrances, and smiled on by him at the great day;—and, heart, art thou so lumpish, as not to be warmed with such thoughts?

This very hint may answer the question before us,—viz. Is every one to believe that he is of the true church? *Answer,*

^l Lam. iv. 2. ^m Mal. iii. 17. ⁿ Psal. lxxxiii. 3. ^o John, xv. 15.
^p 2 Pet. i. 4. ^q 1 John, iii. 2. ^r Deut. xxxii. 10.

Every heart here, is he not to believe that he should be of this church? that it is not well, if he be not so? Nay, farther, that he is to strive with all his endeavour to be of it, or else he is not what he should be? Set this church before you in the picture of it, Matt. xxv. 33, standing on the right hand, and Christ smiling upon it. Do you not believe you should be of that number? Do you not believe you ought to give all diligence to be of it? This is the thing the article calls to you for, when you repeat it. And let me be a little farther its interpreter, to show you yet this church its meaning.

I. It would mind you, that that is the church, that is a church for ever. The church of God is that, that shall be the church of God, when the world shall be no more. I may compare the church visible and invisible, to the body and the soul. The body is visible, and at last shall come to dust: but the soul is invisible, and is immortal. Visible churches have died generation after generation. Where are the visible churches of Asia, Judea, &c? and time will come, when all the visible churches of Europe must come to nothing. But still there was an immortal soul in those churches, a company of holy ones, that go to be a church of God in another world, to praise, glorify, and have communion with, God for ever. This church in the world is like the heart in the body of man, "*Primum vivens, et ultimum moriens*," "The first that lives, and the last that dies." It began to live in Adam and Eve, when they embraced Christ; and when it dies, the world must die with it. When the last saint is gathered, then even the soul of the world, and of the visible church, is gone, and they die too.

The life of the visible church is the word, and sacraments, and ordinances: wheresoever these are, there the church is alive. But if these are not rightly administered, the candlestick is removed; it hath but a name that it liveth, but is dead. And how hath God, or may God remove these? But the life of the invisible church is the word and spirit, and neither of these is ever to be removed; for both are settled in heaven. Observable is that phrase, Jam. i. 21, "The ingrafted word." It is fast joined, and growing in the heart. In the visible church, it is in the hands; but, to the true flock of Christ, it is in the heart and spirit, and there for ever.

II. This is the church-militant here. Much is spoken of the church-militant, and Scripture warrants such a title: “Ye fight against principalities and powers;” and, “as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” Now, how many thousands are there in the visible church, that never strike stroke, that are lookers on; nay, scarce so much; that mind not the Christian warfare at all, and that never resist the flesh, the world, or the devil?

II. I come now to the second question, “How far to believe the church;”—as the church is sometimes taken for councils, synods, or convocations, or primitive fathers. I mean not barely the collier’s faith, to believe as the church believes, though he knew not what it was; but knowing thoroughly the determinations of these, whether it be absolutely necessary for us to believe them, because they are the determinations of the church.

The Romanist saith, ‘Yes:’—and he that believes not what holy mother church determines, is a heretic. He that believes not according to what the council of Trent hath determined, let him be anathema.

For answer, we first begin here:—that the Scriptures contain all things needful for faith and life; as that in Isa. viii. 19, 20; “And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards, that peep, and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? ———To the law, and to the testimony. If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them:”—so may I say also in this case; if they say to you, Seek to councils, fathers, canons, determinations of the church,—‘To the law, and to the testimony;’ to Scripture and holy writ, that contains every thing you need to inquire after for salvation; what to be believed, and what to be done. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” Whithersoever you need to walk for the pleasing of God, doing your duty to men, or to your own souls, the word of God is a light sufficient. In the place before-mentioned, Isa. viii. 19, 20, “Should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony.” It is curiosity to inquire after necromancy. But if we desire to know what is fit and needful,—‘To the law, and to the testimony.’—Mal. iv. 4, “Remember ye the

law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb, for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments." Prophecy was then ceasing. People might complain, 'What shall we do for instruction?'—Why, go to the word of God, which you have in your hands, to the law of Moses, that will teach you.—Dives^t desires Abraham to send one from the dead to teach his brethren, that they might escape that place of torment. No, that needs not; Moses and the prophets will teach all things needful. "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." The apostle speaks this fully, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17; "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

The Papist saith, It is not sufficient to instruct in all things of religion.—True; not of the Romish religion. For the rags that patch that, you must go to some broker; for the divine wardrobe of Scripture hath none such; viz. the orders of monks and friars, pilgrimages, single life of the clergy, salt, oil, spittle in baptism, tapers at the communion, processions, praying to and for the dead, and a thousand other trinklements and trumperies.—Scripture never knew such base ware; we must go to some other kind of shop for it. And that pedlar, with them, is tradition. When they cannot find authority to warrant them by Scripture, then they have recourse to some tradition. When they have some bastard doctrine or practice, and want Scripture to father it, then they go to some old rotten tradition. Just so did the Jews; and these are so like them, that egg to egg is not more. You know Christ's accusation of those^u; "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." And the very same quarrel hath he against these. The Jews pretended a thousand traditions of the fathers,—so do these: they equalled them with Scripture,—so do these: they spoiled all religion, and made the word of God of none effect,—and so do these; as if God were a niggard in his word, and did not afford food for salvation, but we must seek it in dunghills.

^t Luke, xvi. 31.

^u Matt. xv, 8, 9.

The Scriptures are called the “ Scriptures of truth, the word of grace, of salvation, able to make man perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work ;” and yet these, forsooth, must be patched out with traditions, or they avail nothing. As Argo was patched, till there was nothing of the old ship left, so these men have patched up a word of God, till there is nothing of the word of God left in it.

Secondly ; The Scriptures are to be believed for themselves, and they need not fetch their credit from any thing else. Dan. x. 21 ; “ I will show thee that, which is noted in the Scripture of truth.” They are the truth.—See John v. 39 ; “ Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they that testify of me.” Observe the bent of Christ’s discourse. To clear that he was the Messias, he produceth the witness of John, ver. 33 ; “ Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.”—His own works, ver. 36 ; “ But I have a greater witness than that of John ; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.”—A voice from heaven, ver. 37 ; “ And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me.” But he concludes in Scripture, as the most undeniable testimony ; “ Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life ; and they are they that testify of me.” See also 2 Pet. i. 17—19 ; “ For he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, &c. And this voice, which came from heaven, we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy.” A voice from heaven might possibly deceive ; the Jews feigned such ; but the word of prophecy is sure ; that is a ‘ more sure word.’

The reason of the Scriptures’ credibility is, because they are the word of God : 1 Thess. ii. 13 ; “ When ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God : which effectually worketh also in you that believe.” They received it as the word of God. How knew they that ? From the Scriptures themselves.—Therefore it is said, that they are the formal object of faith, as well as the material. They contain what is to be believed, and the reason why to believe them ; and that is especially twofold :—

I. The majesty of the Spirit of God speaking in them.

II. Their powerful working.

I. The majesty of the Spirit of God speaking in them such things, as man cannot speak. “The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God^v.” And we may say, the deep things of man; yea, and “the depths of Satan^w.”

1. How impossible is it for man to reveal the deep mysteries of salvation, i. e. the mind of God! 1 Cor. ii. 16; “Who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.” In Scripture we have it; and ver. 7—9 of that chapter, “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for, had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, &c. the hidden wisdom of God.” Let all the wits in the world have conspired together, could they have told the secret wisdom and mind of God, about salvation; God, Christ, and the divine operation of his Spirit, the fruits of grace, and the weight of eternal glory? How blind was the wisdom of all the world to these mysteries! So far, that when they were revealed, they were accounted but folly; 1 Cor. i. 25; “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men;” that is, as they took them. And that opinion is transplanted into Papacy, which will find out a wiser way to salvation, than the Scriptures have directed.

Herein the majesty of Scripture shows itself, because it speaks of those sublime, divine hidden things, that men’s wisdom could never find out. As they, John vii. 46, are convinced that Christ was more than other men, because ‘he spake as never man spake,’—so the majesty of the Scriptures declares, that they are the divine word of God, because men never spake, men cannot speak, as they speak.

2. The majesty of the Spirit in Scripture appears, in that it reveals the very thoughts, and commands the very heart, of man. “The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of

^v 1 Cor. ii. 10.

^w As Rev. ii. 24.

the heart^x.” And 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25; “ But, if all prophecy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report, that God is in you of a truth.” It can discover a hypocrite, can make an atheist tremble, can pierce to the very thoughts, and imaginations of the heart. That, as the woman of Samaria said, because Christ had told her the secret wickedness of her life^y, “ Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did;” so we must conclude of this,—it is able to discern, check, regulate, the very thoughts of the heart: therefore, not the invention of men, but the powerful, divine, searching word of God.

3. The majesty of the Scriptures appears, in that it discovers the very subtilties of Satan. “ We are not ignorant of his wiles,” saith the apostle. How come we to know them? This divine light hath showed them. It would have been hard to have known that there is a devil, had not this discovered it; and it would have been impossible to have discovered his plots, and malice, and temptations, else. This divine word hath done it in despite of Satan. Would he ever have had his plots discovered, if he could have hindered, that men should know his mischief, and malice, and subtilty? He would gladly have walked as an angel of light, that men might not suspect his delusions; but this divine word hath pulled off his vizor, and showed his designs in open light. It madded the king of Syria, that all his secret stratagems against the king of Israel were discovered by the prophet Elisha^z. It vexeth this king of darkness, that his private policies and actings should be laid open; but this sacred word doth it, and he cannot prevent it.

Thus doth the Scripture reveal itself to be the word of God, by its divine majesty, wherein it speaketh,—and by the wisdom, wherein it shows itself.

II. In its powerful working; breaking hearts, converting souls, conquering the kingdom of Satan. How have the Scriptures gone through the world, and made nations bow before them, and have cast out Satan and his power; so that, if we should say, as they did, “ What sign showest thou,

^x Heb. iv. 12.

^y John, iv. 29.

^z 2 Kings, vi. 11, 12.

that thou art Christ?" so, What sign show ye, that ye are the word of God? They may answer, Look through the world; how many thousands have been converted and saved,—how is the idolatry and blindness of the heathen cast out,—how hath Satan been bound, and many poor souls taught, and armed to resist, all his power!

Papists talk much what the sign of the cross, and holy water, can do for mastering the devil. 'Fabulæ aniles.' But thousands of experiences have showed, what the divine word of God in Scripture can do against him. And thus do they evidence themselves to be the word of God, and so to be believed for themselves, because they are the word of God.

Then, is no man, no company of men, to be believed, but as what they say, is agreeable to Scripture? No council, father, church. If they speak not according to Scripture, it is because there is no light in them, and not to be believed. "Let God be true, and every man a liar," saith the apostle. So we are to say in this case, Whosoever speaks not according to the truth of God in Scripture, he is but a liar, and the truth is not in him.

You understand, that I speak of things of faith and religion. In historical, natural, civil, moral things, we deny not, but that they speak much truth. But that is to be tried by our reading and reason. But in the things of divine concernment, there is no truth, but that of Scripture, or what speaks agreeable to it. "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed^a."

I might instance, how the fathers themselves harp upon this string. "Non quid Augustinus, nec quid Hieronymus, sed quid Scriptura:" "Not that which Austin or Jerome says, but what the Scriptures say, is truth." And, "Non creditur, quia non scribitur;" "It is not believed, because it is not written." And, "Non quid Hieronymus, sed quid Moses, quid Paulus;" "Not that which Jerome saith, but what Moses, what Paul, say."

Let us determine the thing by the determination of this question,—Is any man to be damned, if he believe not what the church, councils, fathers, have spoken? A Papist may chance say so; but will either reason or conscience say so with him? Let any religious conscience say, Can he think

^a Gal. i. 8.

himself damned, because he believes not every thing that the council of Nice hath decreed ; or what Jerome, or Austin have spoken? They have confessed themselves men subject to error: I know they were so: and must I be bound, upon pain of damnation, to believe what, it may be, in time they believed not themselves?

And let reason speak, Must I be bound to believe every tradition, that a monk, friar, or a whole church of such, hold out; fetched no one knows whence?—Here is the advantage of your Protestant religion, here the benefit of the ministry; we refuse not, nay, we beg, that you try the Scriptures, whether we speak true or no. If not, spit in our faces. Do you think the apostle took it ill^a, that the Bereans tried his doctrine by the Scriptures? Luke hath honoured them for it, with the title of, “More honourable than those of Thessalonica.” And it speaks the mind of Paul, with whom he travelled, that he took it well too. Our ministry begs this of you, that you consult your Bibles, whether we speak true or no; and we have but one request more,—that if you find it true, you would believe, embrace, and follow it.

A Popish preacher would tell you, ‘You must believe it, whether you understand it or no; whether it be agreeable to Scripture or no. For the church, such a council, or father, hath said it; and they know better than you.’ I may say, as it is, 1 Cor. xv. 19; “If, in this life only, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.” So we are in a miserable condition, if, upon the penalty of salvation, we are to believe every tradition, and trash, that foolish or ungodly men would put upon us. But we have a sure word of prophecy, and make much of Scriptures, and bless God for them, that we have what to rely on. Miserable faith! to believe as the church believes, we know not what; or if we do, we know not why. But we know what we believe,—viz. the word of God; and we know why we believe it,—viz. because it is the word of God.

Object. ‘But how do we believe, that they are the Scriptures, but that the church hath told us so? How do we believe that such and such books were written by such and such men, but by the authority of the church? And the Scriptures had never come to you, if it were not for the church of Rome.’ Thus they plead.

^a Acts, xvii. 11.

Answer, I. If the church of Rome could have hindered, we must never have had the Scriptures, as we have. Some of the learnedest of them have called the Scripture, ‘A book of heresies,’ and wished that there were none at all. And they keep them from their own people; and have put not a few to death for reading them, for having Bibles. And would they let us have them, if they could choose? They are sensible, that we by Scripture have discovered their errors, and that we are thereupon withdrawn from them: and would they have conveyed them to us?

No, it was the work of the Lord, and the mercy of the Lord; and it is marvellous in our eyes, that all their policy, and the sleight of Satan, could not hinder them from us. Like to that picture, where you have a candle burning, and pope, and friars, and the devil, blowing, and cannot blow it out. This divine light is the sun in the world, that cannot be so totally clouded, but that God makes it break out here and there. What would the pope give, that there were not a Bible in all the Protestant churches! For then should we be led blindfold by them, as they would have it. But blessed be God, who hath showed us light: that light is in Goshen. Which if at the courtesy of Rome, we must never have had it.

II. As far as we owe our receiving of Scripture to men, we are least beholden to the Romish church. They put us off with a Latin translation, barbarous and wild. But we have a surer word, the sacred Hebrew, and divine Greek. And the Hebrew we owe to the Jews, and the Greek to the Greek church, rather than the Roman. “Unto them [the Jews] were committed the oracles of God^b.” And from them we received the Old Testament: and not from them neither; for could they have prevented, we had not had it.

Consider how many copies were abroad in the world. The Old Testament was in every synagogue: and how many copies would men take of the New? So that it is impossible, but still Scripture must be conveyed.

Could all the policy of Satan have hindered, he had done it: for the word of God is his overthrow; so that it was owing to a divine hand. And our faith stands not on the church to believe the Scriptures; but God hath carried the authority of them from age to age. “I receive not testi-

^b Rom. iii. 2.

mony from men," saith Christ. No more does his word : but the Scriptures themselves have overpowered the belief of men.

As to the comparison commonly made from John iv. 42, "They said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying ; for we have heard him ourselves ; and know that this is, indeed, the Christ:" they first believed the woman ; but then they believed not for her words, but for Christ's sake. So first, say some, men believe the Scriptures are Scriptures for the church's sake ; but after, for their own.

But it is not proper to say, We believe Scriptures are Scriptures, because of the church, without distinguishing upon believing. As Austin's, "Non credidissem Scripturis," &c. "I had not believed the Scriptures, had not the church told me;" that is, while he was unconverted. But we may satisfy this by an easy distinction, betwixt believing that Scripture is Scripture, and believing that the church all along hath taken them for Scripture.

To make this plain by a comparison. 'Canones Apostolorum,' and 'Donatio Constantini,' are believed by the church of Rome to be from the very apostles, and Constantine. I believe, that that church believed them so ; and yet I believe not a word of them to be so. My belief, the church held them so, is from the church ; but my belief, they are not so, is from themselves. A good soul desires to build up itself by the rule of faith and life. He finds, that the church hath counted Scripture so ; and that he believes. But as yet he believes not they are Scriptures upon that account : but he reads, studies, meditates on them, finds the divine excellency, sweetness, power of them ; and then he believes they are the word of God. And that now is not for the church's sake, but for themselves.

The church of England, in the thirty-nine articles, hath determined such books canonical. Why ? Because the church hath ever held them so ? That is some furtherance to their belief, but not the cause of it. They first believed the church held them so, but they saw cause and reason in the books themselves to believe they were so. As the Samaritans believed not at first, that Christ was Christ, for the woman's relation ; but they believed she thought so, and believed he might be so : but that he was so, they believed upon his own

words:—so we believe the church owns the Scriptures; but he is but a poor Christian, that believes the Scriptures are the Scriptures upon no other account. He may believe the canons of the council of Trent about Scripture upon such an account: but he is a right Christian, that believes the Scripture is the word of God upon proof and trial.

III^b.*The Communion of Saints.*

THIS article harps upon the string of that before, “I believe the holy Catholic church;” and I believe that church is in a communion. It is a church of saints, for it is a holy church; and though it be Catholic, dispersed in divers nations, yet there is a communion of those saints.

But to what is this article material? What is it to me, whether there be a communion of saints or no? It is material in itself; and if thou beest a true Christian, it is material to thee. And there is no true saint, but he blesseth God, that there is such a communion; and he rejoiceth to be of that communion; as in the opening of the thing you will see the cause.

If I should say, ‘there is a communion of devils, or a communion of ungodly wretches, devils incarnate,’ I doubt it would prove too true; and it might not be unprofitable to observe such a fearful communion, to avoid it. But when I say ‘there is a communion of saints,’ it is not only a truth in divinity, but it is a comfort in religion, and a persuasive in reason, that men would strive to be of that communion, if they did but understand what it meant.

It is not only, ‘I believe there is a company of saints,’ for the article before speaks that; but ‘I believe there is a sacred union, communion, common interest, among that company; which is advantageous to every member, and to the whole.’

What this communion is, and wherein it consists, we must find out by these considerations:—

I. That saints are very thin in the world: here one of Christ’s little flock, there another; but very rare. “And I will take you one of a city, and two of a family; and I will

^b Not in the English folio-edition.

bring you to Zion^c." There were many thousands in the city, and but one of so many; and many cities in a tribe, and but two of all these, the Lord's picked ones, to bring to Zion.

Take the character of a true saint of God, as David pictures him^d, and how rarely is such a one to be found. Day was, when, in all Jerusalem, among thousands of persons, such a person was not to be found. "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, and seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it^e."

Cast out the chaff and refuse that is in the world, and how very little wheat is to be found! Openly profane, and close hypocrites; carnal gospellers, and lukewarm Christians; covetous worldlings, and voluptuous epicures; set these aside by themselves: and look at those that truly fear God, and eschew evil; that deny themselves, and dare not break any command of God; and how small is that number! But three hundred in Gideon's army fit to do the work of God, of thirty-two thousand! If there be three hundred of three hundred thousand, that prove true saints, it is well if there be so many, as it is sad there be no more.

Let me pose any one, or let every one pose their own heart: Dost thou think thou art a true saint of God? Every one will be ready to assume the title; but sift thy heart to the bran, and what saith it? Is there no love of the world? No malice, pride, self-seeking, coldness in religion, carelessness of duty, there? I tell thee, a saint's heart is a rare jewel; we may go a great way before we find one. "O that all the Lord's people were prophets!" as Moses said; so I say, O that they were saints! But it proves not so. A saint is a rare creature, and they grow very thin in the world; here and there a berry in the top of a bough; here and there a plant of the Lord's planting, but very rare.

Therefore, when the Creed speaks of the 'Catholic church,' meaning true saints, that serve God in truth, it speaks not 'multitude,' though it mean 'universal.' But it speaks, that such are scattered up and down the world; here some in one nation, there some in another; here one in one city, there another in another.

II. Therefore, 'communion of saints' cannot mean per-

^c Jer. iii. 14.

^d Psal. xv.

^e Jer. v. 1.

sonal or local union, or communion: saints in one place, or in one lump, together: not a college of all saints in one place, but a communion betwixt them, as scattered here and there, all the world over. As there is a communion betwixt two friends, one in Turkey, another in England; one in New England, another in Old.

The Jews little understand the 'communion of saints,' when they construe Hos. i. 11, "Then shall the children of Judah, and the children of Israel, be gathered together, and they shall appoint themselves one head," &c. (and such other places), literally, of their meeting together, and going to Canaan together, and dwelling there together;—whereas the words mean their gathering into communion of another nature.

How would you understand that, Matt. xxiv. 31, "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." By the 'angels,' he means his messengers the ministers; by the 'sound of a trumpet,' he means the gospel; by the whole he means, that, after the destruction of Jerusalem, of which the speech is in the verses before,—God, by the preaching of the gospel, would fetch in his elect among all nations, or call home the Gentiles. But how gather them together? What, into any one place, or country, or city? No, but into such a communion, as we are speaking of, in the several nations or countries, where they lived: one saint in Judea, another in Assyria, another in Greece: all staying in the place where they receive the gospel, and yet all gathered together into one communion.

III. This communion is twofold: doctrinal and spiritual.

1. Doctrinal.—As they do communicate in one and the same faith, or profession of one and the same religion; so all Protestant churches hold communion in one and the same doctrine of faith, and, in regard of that, disunion with the church of Rome. Holland and we, though so disunited, in regard of civil converse, yet we are at communion as Christians, in the profession of the same religion.

But this is not the communion the article means. It speaks of communion of 'saints.' Now every profane, carnal Protestant, may hold such communion in outward profession of the same religion. Thousands of profane persons in England hold communion thus even with the precious saints,

viz. that they acknowledge the same articles of religion, and yet are far from the communion of saints here spoken of. Therefore, the communion of saints is,

II. Spiritual.—A hidden manna: a communion that the world knows not; a spiritual interest, and communicating, which they only partake of, and which they only are sensible of. Which we may discern the better, by observing these things:—

1. That there is one and the same spirit in every true saint of God in the world; “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit^f.” True, there are diversities of degrees of grace, and of operations, but one and the same Spirit, ‘that worketh all in all.’ As kinsmen have communion in kindred, because the same blood runs in all their veins; so saints have spiritual communion, because the same Spirit dwells in them all: as in that comparison, that they are members of the same body, because the same spirit of life is in every one of the members.

It was the custom of the Jews to enter into communion, by eating of the same bread. To which the apostle alludes, “For we, being many, are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread^g.” And hereupon they might not eat with those, with whom they might not have communion. So Christ feasts all his with the same Spirit; “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit^h.” That it is that gives their souls life and growth, because they are all fed with the same Spirit.

This is the hunger and thirst of a child of God, to be filled and refreshed with his Spirit: and this is the feeding and refreshing God affords them.—John vi. 55. 63: “For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” And, John vii. 37. 39; “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him, should receive.” This was David’s hunger and thirst, when his soul was almost starved by his great fall: “Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thine Holy Spirit from me. Re-

^f 1 Cor. xii. 4.

^g 1 Cor. x. 17.

^h 1 Cor. xii. 13.

store unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spiritⁱ." And this is a trial, whether a soul be alive and healthy, and whether a person be a saint or no, by his longing and hungering for the Spirit of God.

Examine your stomach; what craves it? Lord, give me corn and cattle. After these things the Gentiles seek, not the saints of God. But, Lord, give me thy Spirit, fill me with thy grace, support my fainting soul with the Spirit of grace. This is a blessed hungering and thirsting, which shall be blessedly satisfied. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled^k." Thus, in the first place, saints have all communion in the same Spirit of Christ; drink of the same fountain; eat and feed upon the same manna.

2. Thus all communicating of the same Spirit of God, they have, by that Spirit, communion with God himself: "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ^l." A high saying, blessed apostle; fellowship with God and Christ! Let Haman brag of his great friendship with Ahasuerus:—let men boast of their accompanying with this and that great man; their friendship and acquaintance with this or that noble person: it is enough, if I can say, 'I am acquainted with God, I have friendship and fellowship with God, and his Son Jesus Christ.'

Acquainted with God! Communion with Christ! Brave company! That man can never be alone, never want excellent company. Ah! poor Paul, how dost thou do for company, in a dark, lonely, prison? Daniel, how solitary art thou in a den of lions, when thou hast no company but those cruel creatures! "Oh! nunquam minus solus, quam cum solus." I have God and Christ with me; they keep me company, and I can have no better. And so God himself hath promised:—"When thou goest through the waters, I will be with thee." Observe that promise,—"I will be with you always, even unto the end of the world^m." Alas! we shall be in prisons, in stocks: ay, but then ye shall not be alone; for, "I will be with you to the end of the world."

What mean such expressions, but that God is present, near to his own people, in an extraordinary manner, different from common providence? That expression, 'walking with God,' doth hint special intercourse and converse be-

ⁱ Psal. li. 11, 12.

^k Matt. v. 6.

^l 1 John, i. 3.

^m Matt. xxviii. 20.

twixt God and the saint, as betwixt two friends walking together. Observe a feeling exposition of it, Psal. lxxiii. 23, 24, &c; “Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by thy right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee.”

Here let us stay; and we may stand amazed, that poor, sinful men may have the honour and happiness of communion with God. “Will God dwell upon earth?” It was Solomon’s wonder. So may we wonder at this,—that God should converse, be in fellowship, and in familiarity, with men. If God should take advantage of that, ‘Be not unequally yoked,’ how far may this speak contrary to such communion? For what infinite inequality is there betwixt God and man, Creator and creature, dust and glory? An expression of this communion you have, Rev. iii. 20; “If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” And another, Isa. lxvi. 1, 2; “Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made; and all those things have been, saith the Lord. But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite heart, and trembleth at my word;” I will look to such, have a friendly regard, and respect to him. Nay, I will come, and converse, and sup, and dwell, with him.—This was David’s desire; “Oh, when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk in my house with a perfect heartⁿ:” I will walk in my house: when wilt thou come, and walk and dwell with me?

Now, this communion betwixt God and saints we may consider in the rise of it, the nature of it, and the means and manner of it.

I. The rise of it. It ariseth from the union that is betwixt God and the saint. We can never have fellowship with God, unless we be at one with God. Abraham was the friend of God, and so he and God conversed:—there is no communion betwixt enemies. Isa. lix. 1, 2; “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save: neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:—but your iniquities have separated be-

ⁿ Psal. ci. 2.

tween you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." Why is God such a stranger to you? You are his enemies: But turn to me, saith the Lord, and I will turn unto you. Isa. i. 16—18: "Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do dwell, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come, now, and let us reason together."

II. The nature of this communion is, that God imparts himself to the saint, and the saint to God.—"I your God, you my people." There is no strangeness betwixt them. They do freely give up hearts one to another, as they that are in friendship, and tell their minds one to another.

III. The means of this communion is by God's ordinances, and by his Spirit.

1. It is impossible to have communion with God, but by way of his ordinances;—the word, prayer, sacraments, and meditation upon all. Communion is more than union. A man in walking holily, walks in union with God; but to come in communion or converse with God, is something more. Two friends apart are at one, but their converse together is by letter or conference.

מוֹעֲדִים, 'Set-festivals,' signify 'meetings' also; people meeting in communion with themselves, and with God in these appointments. "Thou meetest him^o," &c. As it is impossible to have union with God, but in virtue of his covenant, so to have communion, but in the administrations of the covenant: Exod. xxiv. 11, "And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink." By virtue of the covenant, spoken of just before, they were at peace with God, so that "he laid not his hand on them;" and by the administration of the covenant, they were in communion;—"They ate and drank with him."

There is a farther striving in attendance upon ordinances, than merely to do work, to hear, to patter out some prayers, and the like; but to taste and feel God in his word, to send up the heart to God, and to lay hold on him. Do you not do it here, and in your closet, in prayer, and in reading? This is not to draw near to God, and hold communion with him. How heartily doth a true saint pour out his heart, tell

his mind to God, his failings, his wants, as one friend to another! This is the reason why we should pray, though God knows our wants. "Your heavenly Father knows, that ye have need of these things."—Why, then, have we need to tell him? That we may show our communion with God, and that we trust him with our hearts and estates.

How doth a true saint lay hold on every word of God, as Ben-hadad's servants by Ahab's! "Oh! this instruction, this reproof, this exhortation, is God's mind to me. This is a letter or message sent to me for my good." He owns God, as in love and friendship, imputing his mind to him.

This is communion with God in ordinances; to tell God all our soul in prayer, to taste the mind of God to us-ward in hearing, and attendance upon sermons. But,

2. Communion with God is by his Spirit: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all^p." What does the apostle wish for in these words, *κοινωνία πνεύματος*, 'communion of the Spirit?' That they always may have the fellowship of the Spirit; and also, by communion of the Spirit, fellowship with God. Take one example:—"The Spirit itself maketh intercession^q." Where is this Spirit? In heaven? No: the Spirit of God in the soul, stirring up and enlarging the heart. "The Spirit of grace and supplications^r." Here is the double communion of the Spirit spoken of,—the Spirit always with the saint, and the Spirit helping him to converse with God in prayer; bringing the heart and God together. "The Spirit maketh intercession." Oh! how comfortable are the prayers of a saint! He hath a twofold intercessor;—viz. the Spirit in his heart, enabling him to pray;—and Christ in heaven praying or interceding for him.

So for communion and other ordinances. The eucharist is called the 'communion,' not only of receivers among themselves, but of the true receiver with God and Christ. God in it holds out the benefits of Christ. The holy receiver, by the Spirit and grace of God, thanks him for those benefits, takes hold of them, and receives them at the hand of God, and tastes the sweetness of God's gifts in them.

So in 'hearing,' the heart owns God speaking, counseling, comforting. Oh! "This is the voice of my Beloved." And the heart all along gives up itself to God's counsel, cor-

^p 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

^q Rom. viii. 26.

^r Zech. xii. 10.

rection, and administration. This is spiritual communion with God in his ordinances.

Besides what I have already said upon this argument, consider but two expressions, whereby Scripture sets forth the union of a saint with God; and then judge of the communion.

I. Under the notion of marriage betwixt the soul and God. "For thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of hosts is his name^s." "I will betroth thee to myself for ever^t." Oh! what tidings are these to a poor soul! The Lord espouse it,—be a husband to it! Awake up, put on thy ornaments, O my soul: behold, thy bridegroom cometh, go forth to meet him. Ah! dull, dirty, souls of ours, why do we sit among the pots, and marry ourselves to earth and dunghills, when a soul may have the Lord for a husband, and be espoused to him for ever? Now, experience tells, what communion there is betwixt wife and husband, as well as Scripture; what union, communion, of hearts, of estates, of affections; neither is their own, but one another's. Such is the communion betwixt a holy soul and God.—They are married together; their hearts, as I may say, are interchanged, and entirely each other's. "Thou shalt be for me, and not another; and I will be for thee, saith the Lord^u."

Observe that expression,—“He that is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit^v.” Here is union and communion. ‘Joined to the Lord:’ Beza renders it ‘agglutinated:’—there is union. And communion, ‘one spirit.’ He takes some comparison before from a married couple. But this is nearer; there must be a union betwixt man and wife; nay, there is betwixt man and whore. “Know ye not, that he which is joined to a harlot, is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh.” But it may be no communion of hearts and affections: “But he that is joined to God, is one spirit.”

II. Observe this communion by the expression of the ‘members of his body;’ which the apostle follows in 1 Cor. xii; especially see ver. 27: “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” Ye are the body in gross,—and every particular Christian, a particular member. Now, the body and members relate to the head, which is Christ: Eph. iv. 15, “That ye may grow into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body is fitly

^s Isa. liv. 5.

^t Hos. ii. 19.

^u Hos. iii. 3.

^v 1 Cor. vi. 17.

joined together." And, Col. i. 18; "He is the head of the body, the church."

So that here you may first see the union betwixt Christ and his members, and then the communion. The union, as the head to the body: the communion, as betwixt head and members. So, what nearer union or communion can be in the world? And this asserts what I said, that communion with God and Christ is founded in union with God. No member, if not in union with the head; and if a member so in union, it cannot but have communion. Members cannot but derive virtue from the head; and cannot again but be serviceable all they can to it. Such a communion is there betwixt a saint and God. And what the particular nature or virtue of it is, learn by observing how it comes, and how a saint comes by it. For the discovery of which, we will take up this question to speak to:—

Quest. How should I do to come in communion with God? I know it is good and happy; but how shall I come by it?

Ans. Learn this from civil converse betwixt friend and friend. "Abraham was the friend of God;" and he came into that nearness, after the manner as friend doth with friend. Observe two expressions in Scripture, 'knowing of God;' "Thou, Solomon my son, know the God of thy father." And 'acquainting one's-self with God;' "Acquaint now thyself with him." So is the case with two, that come to converse as friends. I know such a person, and I make myself acquainted with him.

I. So that the first step to communion with God, is to 'know' him. But under what notion, or what knowledge?

1. Not a distant knowledge; as wicked men know there is a God. This is far from bringing into acquaintance. Every one of us knows, there is a Turk and pope; but this is far from being in converse with them. Nay, nearer; we all know the king is our sovereign, and own him so,—yet this is far from conversing with him. It is said, "God beholds the wicked afar off." So they, though they knew him, they knew but afar off. As he, that was newly cured of his blindness in the gospel, saw men walk, but they seemed to him like trees. As Balaam saith of his seeing of God^x, "I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh."

^v 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

^w Job, xxii. 21.

^x Num. xxiv. 17.

2. Nor is it barely to know God in his attributes,—that he is terrible, glorious, just. The devils know all this; but as far from communion with God, as hell is from heaven.

3. But so to know God is to love and desire him and his communion. He that would be acquainted with one, looks not on him barely as one he knows, nor barely as one worthy to be acquainted with; but as by whose acquaintance to have comfort, benefit, and delight, and which he cannot comfortably be without.

Such is that knowledge of God, that begins communion with God. To make it our work to know God, as without knowledge of whom, and acquaintance with whom, we are undone; to desire his knowledge and acquaintance above all things in the world, and to account nothing in the world worth our study, knowledge, and acquaintance, but himself. So the apostle professeth over and over^y: “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” For nothing else, in comparison of him, is worth the study and labour to know. And^z, “Yea, doubtless,” without any dispute, “and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord.” This is that that makes me justly to move the question, Do you seriously ask, how I may come in communion with God? Because that requires the preparative of the most affectionate desires to come into communion with him. Such a desire breathes the heart of a true saint; “The desire of our souls is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early^a.”

II. The second means to come into communion with God, is to be ‘acquainted’ with him. Now, to make yourselves acquainted with God, be not strange to him. “The wicked are estranged from the womb;” not only not knowing God, but not making himself known to God. The word in Job^b, which we translate ‘acquaint,’ is הִסְכֵּן “Accustom thyself to God.” The word is used elsewhere^c; “The ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? Was I ever went,” or accustomed, “to do so unto thee?” So that the word signifies ‘accustoming,’ ‘frequenting.’ A saint ac-

^y 1 Cor. ii. 2.

^z Phil. iii. 8.

^a Isa. xxvi. 8, 9.

^b Chap. xxii. 21.

^c Num. xxii. 30.

quaints himself with God by frequent coming to his presence, in prayer, and hearing, and attending on him. As^d all knew the poor cripple, 'which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple,' because there he constantly sat; so God knows the face of a saint; he is ever and anon in the presence of God. Oh! I know thee by name, thou art always at my footstool, thou art always in my school. "I know thee, Moses, by name," saith God. And very good reason for it; he was always in his presence. "I am continually with thee^e." Was it possible, then, but that God should know him?

God, at the judgment, will say to the wicked, "I know you not." And no wonder; for he never saw their faces in his family. "You are none of my children: I never saw you owning your dependance upon me, knowing me as the Father. None of my servants: I never saw you doing my work. None of my scholars: I never saw you in my school, studious, and taking out your lesson. Your faces are strangers to me: I never saw them look towards me, but away from me. Therefore, 'Depart, I know you not.'"

There is none but would desire to be owned at that great day. Oh! acquaint thyself with God here, walk before him continually, that he may know thee. Be constantly in his house, about his work, that he may know thee, and take notice of thee. This was the course of David^f; "Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed." Lord, I am here in thy house daily before thee, look upon my face; know me, own me for one of thy household.

Thus a saint and God are come into acquaintance. The communion betwixt them is yet something more. That is the holy place, this the holy of holies.

Quest. But wherein doth it consist or appear? Is a saint always sensible, that he hath communion with God? If so, why doth he so oft complain, that God hides himself, that he hears not, that he is angry? He cannot find, that he is at peace and union with God,—much less in communion.

Answ. To speak as to the acting of both parties in this case. For communion is a relative or mutual thing,—viz. of a saint to God, and of God to a saint.

I. A saint's communion with God is, first, that he goes

^d Acts, iii. 10.

^e Psal. lxxiii. 23.

^f Psal. lxxxiv. 9.

to God as to his only friend, to impart his mind and heart to him, and to trust in, and rely upon, him. Hence is mention of “going with confidence to the throne of grace: and of boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus^g,” as the high-priest went into the most holy place to converse with God. In all his straits he goes with confidence to God, as his only friend; in all his wants he goes to God, as his dearest one, whom to rely upon.

Object. But, many a time, he thinks God is become his enemy; that he frowns as a foe, and smiles not as a friend.

Answ. True, but look all the Book through, and the stories of holy men, and you never find a saint fleeing from God, as an enemy, but getting to him, as a friend. The child, though the mother frowns, chides, whips him, yet he will not but still hang upon her. David feels God’s arrows stick in him, Psal. xxxviii. 2; yet, at ver. 9, he goes to him, tells him his condition, as his only friend and relief. “Lord, all my desire is before thee,” &c. I tell thee my whole woful case, as my only friend: ver. 15, “In thee, O Lord, do I hope, thou wilt hear me, O Lord my God.” How doth he there hang on God, and will not leave him! He sees him frown, feels his rod, yet will not run from, but hangs on, him. Lord, I will hope in thee, I know thou wilt not be always angry, but wilt hear me. “Though thou killest me (saith Job), yet will I trust in thee.”

Secondly; He communicates himself to God, in engaging his heart to him, and his ways, and his all to him. God calls^h, “Who is this, that engageth his heart to me?” ‘I do it (saith the saint of God), with all my soul, to be thine, and only thine, and at thy service.’ And this is the saint’s communion with God.

II. We are to consider God’s communion with a saint. How doth God evidence his communion with a saint?

He once did it visibly, as dining with Abraham, supping and lodging with Lot. He sometimes did it, by manifesting his mind by revelations. But since these ceased, we must apprehend his communion in another manner. Therefore, consider that place of Scriptureⁱ, “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant.” To which is parallel^j, “For the froward is abomination to the Lord; but his secret is with the righteous.”

^g Heb. x. 19.

^h Jer. xxx. 21.

ⁱ Psal. xxv. 14.

^j Prov. iii. 32.

Observe the opposition, 'The froward is abomination to the Lord.' God cares not for him, but hates him as his enemy: 'but his secret is with the righteous,' as a friend. But how is his secret with him? He imparts his mind, indeed, to him by his word (and so he does to the wicked too, if they would know it): but does he otherways impart his mind by revelation? Does he always evidence to him his prayer is heard? Doth he ever whisper to him his sins are pardoned; that he shall be delivered out of troubles? Many a dear saint prays long, and yet cannot attain to this discovery; and yet the secret of the Lord is with him. How?

Answer: His secret; that is,—

1. The secret influences of his grace: as [Psal. xvii. 14], "He fills the bellies of worldlings with his hid treasure;" so, he fills the souls of his saints with his hid influences.

2. Secret experiences. He teacheth the soul to feel spiritual experiences, makes him taste how sweet holiness is, and how good it is to serve God.

So that though God communicate not himself by influences of comfort, yet he does by influences of graces.

We have hitherto considered the communion of saints with God; now concerning their communion among themselves. What their communion is, since they are scattered throughout the whole world, let us search out, first, by considering wherein their communion doth not consist; then, wherein it doth.

I. Some have conceived it consisteth in community of goods, from example of that in the apostolic times. "And all that believed, were together, and had all things common^k." "And the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart, and of one soul: neither said any of them, that aught of the things which he possessed, was his own, but they had all things common^l." And cloisters of monks and friars, forsooth, must imitate this, as a saint-like communion.

Do I need to speak any thing in confutation of this mistake, when both Testaments do allow, nay, do enjoin, propriety; and do not only tell, that there is a 'meum' and 'tuum,' but enjoin men to look to their own, to provide for their families, and not to usurp, nay, not to desire, what is another's.

That particular example in the apostles' time, was upon

^k Acts, ii. 44.

^l Acts, iv. 32.

a singular occasion, of which we are not to expect any imitation. The whole church then in Jerusalem; most of them far distant from their own countries. Through this remoteness, there were many poor among them; therefore, it was needful, that some special provision should be made for these poor, lest poverty should have caused them to apostatize. And God stirred up divers to part with their estates for such charitable ends. And none of them knew, how soon they and their estates might be parted by persecution. And Christ had told of a universal deluge coming over the nation. Therefore, upon these grounds, they make friends of the unrighteous Mammon:—a thing not obliging to imitation, because there is not again the like occasion.

II. Some seem to make the communion of saints, no more than the receiving the sacrament together, and will have none but saints to receive it. You know the hot disputes that have been about this. And “for the divisions of Reuben, there are great thoughts of heart.” Hence mainly are our separations and divisions in religion. As in Jephthah’s case, his dear daughter was his greatest trouble. “Alas! my daughter, thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me^m.” So this precious sacrament of communion has unhappily proved the great occasion of division; but in the same notion that Christ was a stumbling-block:—which was not of any fault of his, but of men, in faltering about him.

It is true, receiving of this sacrament is a communion, but it is most especially external, in the profession of the same faith and doctrine of the gospel. And the communion of saints, in this article, aimeth farther.

I have formerly observed to you the phrase, “This is the New Testament in my bloodⁿ.” Not only, ‘My blood of the New Testament,’ nor only, ‘A seal and sanction of the New Testament,’ but the ‘New Testament:’—that is, ‘A new administration of the new covenant; terminating Judaism, and binding over receivers to the profession of the evangelical doctrine and religion.’ So this properly is the communion, that receivers have in this sacrament one with another: viz. that they join in the profession of the same Christian doctrine; and that not only among themselves, but even with the whole church, that professeth the same truth.

^m Judg. xi. 35.

ⁿ 1 Cor. xi. 25.

And hence it was, that, in the infancy of the church, they received the sacrament almost daily; that those new professors might thereby be held to constant profession against revolting to their Judaism.

So that, in this, there is, indeed, something of the communion of saints, all professing the same truth and religion; but we must still look farther for a communion among saints, to take up the full meaning of the article before us.

For the inquiry after which, we are first to consider, that Christ's mystical body, the church, consists of all the saints, that are, or shall be, in the world, from the beginning to the end of it. And so it includes the saints in glory jointly with these, that are yet on earth. Those in glory, members already above water, as their head also is; yet in the waves of this troublesome world, and not got above them.

As it is said of Christ himself^o, "That he grew in stature;" so is the mystical body of Christ growing in stature, till it shall be consummate at the last day. Observe that, Eph. iv. 13; "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the *stature of the fulness* of Christ; or, the measure of the *full stature* of Christ." Some fondly hence conclude, that all saints shall be raised, as at the very age and stature of Christ, when he was raised; which was at his very prime,—viz. two-and-thirty years and a half of age:—that elect infants shall not be raised infants, but as of that age and stature: that the aged shall not be raised as aged, but as at their prime of that age and stature. Which as it breeds confusion in the understanding of the article of the resurrection of the body, so it is clean besides the apostle's intent there. He speaks not of our bodies, but of Christ's mystical body; viz. that God had given apostles and teachers for the building up that body, the church, by degrees,—till it came to its full stature and perfection in the salvation of all that belong to it.

So saints are building up daily; and those that are gone to glory, so much of that body is completed; and the rest growing on to the same perfecting, till all be completed, and the whole body perfected:—so that those completed in glory, and these completing towards glory here, are the same body, though at present of a different condition. The

^o Luke, ii. 52.

church-militant and triumphant are not two churches; not two bodies; but one whole church and body of Christ, consisting of members, some already perfected, and some perfecting. As Israel at the temple in the two courts, were not two congregations and churches, but one congregation in two divers places, two companies of one congregation.

The apostle^p saith, "God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect:" when some say, the saints under the law are not perfected in glory till Christ's coming, but in limbo. Whereas the apostle speaks in the sense we are upon, viz. that those holy ones, without us under the gospel, are not the perfect body of Christ; but the body was to consist of Gentiles, as well as Jews:—of some yet to be saved; as well as of them, that are saved already.

Now, is there any communion betwixt these two parts of the same body, saints on earth, and saints in glory? I mean, is there any imparting of the one to the other, as there is betwixt two parties in communion?

Some will tell you, Yes: we are to pray to them, and they pray for us. As he in the prophet makes a god, and then falls down to it; so it is common in the church of Rome, to make, whom they think good, saints,—and then to pray to them that they would pray for them to God. Whereas they can never clear the praying to creatures from idolatry; and can never prove, that it is possible for a saint in heaven to hear one speaking and praying on earth, much less to know the heart with which he prays. So can they never prove, that there is praying in heaven at all. The church here is called 'the house of prayer;' but it is hard to prove that heaven is so. There is praising, and thanksgiving, and glorifying God, and adoring the Lamb: but where do we ever read of praying in heaven? Nay, can any prove, that Christ prayeth there for his people? But he exerciseth his mediation some other way. He offereth up the prayers of his saints; "And another angel came and stood at the altar having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it, with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne^q." But that he offers them, he praying also, cannot be cleared.

But I shall not insist on this. The article aims at the com-

^p In Heb. xi. 40.

^q Rev. viii. 3.

munion of 'saints upon earth,' according to David's style,^r "To the saints that are in the earth." Saints scattered in the earth,—and yet have they communion? We may think of that, Ezek. xxxvii. 3; Can these dry scattered bones come together and live? Yes (ver. 7); Bone came to his bone, and lived. So, son of man, can men dispersed in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, have communion? They know not one another, never saw one another, and have they communion? Yes: there is an invisible vein of communion runs betwixt all saints on earth:—which we consider in these particulars:—

I. There is a communion of converse, and communion of affection. There may be the former, where there is not the latter. English merchants have communion of converse with outland merchants, when they come among them, buy, sell, eat, drink together; when the communion betwixt them is merely of civil converse, rather than of near affection. And there may be communion of affection, where there is no converse. Nay, there is, as it were, planted in morality, an affection of one excellent person to another. A valiant man loves a valiant man, though he never came near him. A scholar loves a scholar, that he hath only heard of. Much more is such an affection planted in true Christianity in a heart truly religious, be he who he will, where he will; though he never saw him. As^s, "My delight is in the saints, and excellent on the earth," be they far off or near.

II. There is communion in 'common interest,' where, it may be, there is not communion in common converse. Those that never saw or heard of one another to converse together, yet may have communion in common interest. Englishmen meeting beyond sea, that never saw each other before, yet will take parts, and side together, as in the common interest of being countrymen.

There is a common interest of all the saints in the world, though at their never so great distance and separation, viz. glorifying God, and loving the Lord Jesus. As the apostle saith, 1 John i. 3; "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." So the fellowship of the saints among themselves meets in this centre, of loving the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ. And ask the same apostle the exposition of his words in the same Epistle^t, "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the

^r Psal. xvi. 3.^s Psal. xvi. 3.^t Chap. iii. 14.

brethren." He would tell you, 'It is a sign we love God, and so are passed from death to life, because we love the brethren that love God.'

This is the special centre, in which saints meet, be they never so far asunder. And in this sense, their 'gathering together,' is to be understood (of which there is so frequent mention); not into one place, but into this one circle of loving, fearing, serving God; Zeph. iii. 9, "That they may call upon the name of the Lord, and serve him with one consent." In the Hebrew it is, 'with one shoulder;' as if many were together shouldering up the same weight or burden: all in their places jointly putting-to their endeavour to bear up the name, glory, and honour, of God: east, west, north, south, every saint joining in this great work, and meeting in this holy point. As the twelve oxen under the brazen sea, their faces to the four quarters of heaven, but their bodies all meeting to bear up the weight. Now,

III. They that are all of the same mind, all meet in this common interest towards God, cannot but love one another, though they know not one another. "My heart (saith Deborah^u) is towards the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people." Did she know all their faces and persons? Could she call them by their names? No, but she could not but love them, be they who they would, that put-to their hands and shoulders to that common cause. We see, how men are ready to affect any that they hear to be of their opinion, humour, and mind, though they never saw them. Much more does a saint love a saint, that is partner with him in this holy work. Though he knew not where to find him, or name him; yet if he be for God, he must have his heart; and, loving God, he cannot but love whosoever loves him.

IV. Accordingly they sympathize one with another; "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it^v." They "weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice." They "bear one another's burdens." It grieves a saint, if it be ill with any saint in the world; and he rejoiceth, if it go well with him. His heart is touched with his case, as with his own. As we are af-

^u Judg. v. 9.

^v 1 Cor. xii. 26.

fectured with the well or ill doing of any Englishman in any part of the world, for common interest of country's sake.

Neh. i. 4: "And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down, and wept, and mourned, certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven." 'Why Nehemiah? thou art well enough; thou art in place of honour, pleasure, preferment.'—'Oh! but it is ill with the people of God.'—And, Psal. cxxxvii. 5, 6, saith the Psalmist, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy:" I can never forget Jerusalem.

V. Answerably, they have one another's prayers. There is not a saint in the world, but hath the prayers of all the saints in the world. Any child of God makes it conscience to pray for every child of God on earth. One member cannot but do its best for another. "And as many as walk according to this rule, Peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God^w." 'Pray for thyself, Paul, and for thine own churches.'—'Nay, but every saint wherever is a member of the same body that I am of; and, therefore, I must pray for them also.' So Eph. vi. 24; "Grace be with all them, that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Why pray so for them? because of that common interest, that is betwixt all saints. I love Christ, and cannot but love and pray for all that love him.

We may say, as Psal. cxxxiii. 1, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." So, how blessed, how happy, to be thus joined together in this common union! If thy prayers be weak, all the saints in the world pray for thee; if thy estate be miserable, if thou beest tempted, still thou hast the prayers of all good men, throughout the world. Oh! happy condition of a true saint! Christ mediating for him in heaven, and all the saints on earth praying for him; as, Acts xii. 5, "Peter was kept in prison; but prayer was made, without ceasing, of the church of God for him." 'Cheer up, poor child of God; why walkest thou so heavily?'—'Why? the children of Belial curse me, revile me.'—'Oh! but all the saints of God pray for thee.' And this is the true communicating of saints one to another.—And so much for the communion of saints with God, and one with another.

^w Gal. vi. 16.

SERMONS.

CONCIO^a AD CLERUM

IN

VISITATIONE EPISCOPALI,

XXIV. SEPT. ANNO 1674. ELY HABITA.

OREMUS

Pro ecclesia Christi sancta et catholica, ubicunque terrarum sparsa et disseminata: præsertim verò pro ecclesiis hisce, quarum nos pars aliqua sumus, Britannicis et Hibernicis. In his præcipuè pro Serenissimo principe nostro Carolo, Dei gratia, Angliæ, Scotiæ, Franciæ et Hiberniæ rege, fidei defensore; et quoad omnes res et personas tam ecclesiasticas quam civiles, intra hæc regna et dominia sua, constituto a Deo et deputato summo moderatore. Pro Serenissima regina nostra Catharina, Jacobo duce Eboracensi, reliquaue tota familia augusta. Pro patribus ad regiæ majestatis secretiora consilia conscriptis, reliquisque proceribus magistratibusque. Pro universo clero et tota familia Aaronica; præsertim vero pro reverendissimo in Christo patre domino Gilberto archi-episcopo Cantuariensi, metropolitano,—et reverendo admodum in Christo patre domino Benjamino episcopo Eliensi, diocesano nostro plurimum venerando. Pro utraque academia, et pro collegio hoc nostro. Pro toto denique populo, atque universa gente Anglicana. Avertat misericordiarum Deus demerita nostra, resarciat schismata, averruncet hæreses, emendet mores, amoliatur offendicula, et stabiliat gentem in pietate, veritate, tranquillitate, et mutuo amore, et amore Dei.

Deum denique laudemus, et Domino confiteamur, gratias ei agentes pro omnibus beneficiis suis in genus humanum, in ecclesiam, in hanc gentem, in nosmet ipsos collatis; speciatim et præ aliis omnibus pro donato Christo, et pro gratia ejus salvifica, per quam innumeros Sanctos perduxit ad glo-

^a Not in the English folio-edition.—See Leusden's edition, vol. 3. p. 105.—ED.

riam. Pro nobilissimo eorum exemplo, quo nos etiam incitatur atque animamur ad idem stadium. Concedat gratiæ et misericordiarum Pater, ut nos, exemplar eorum exscribentes, insistentes semitis, et prementes vestigia, per eandem gratiam manuducamur tandem ad eandem gloriam et coronam, idque per et propter Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, in cujus nomine et verbis supplicamus, “Pater noster,” &c.

1 COR. VI. 3.

Οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι ἀγγέλους κρινοῦμεν;

Nescitis quod judicabimus Angelos?

FILIOLAM suam, ecclesiam Corinthiacam, ægrotantem valde jam et languescentem, paternis affectibus fletibusque visitat Apostolus in hac epistola, et deplorat paralyticam schismatibus^b, decolorem vitiis^c, phreniticam litibus^d, in ipso denique cultu divino incultissimam^e. Speramus Paternitatem vestram familiam minus valetudinariam visitaturam.

Prima mali labes in hac ecclesia eadem, quæ et fundi nostri calamitas, infelicia schismata: misello populo seipsum non solum in frusta sectarum se divellicante, sed friante potius et conterente in pulverem discordiarum. Posthabita enim reverentia evangelii, honore Christiani nominis conculcato, et vinculo caritatis non tam rupto quidem quam in nihilum corrupto, canina feritate in se invicem ringunt, litigationibus mordacibus sese mutuo corrodunt, dilaniant, exedunt, idque coram Ethnico tribunali. ‘Hoccine Evangelium pacis,’ inquiet Ethnicus et ridebit? ‘Hæccine pax Evangelii?’

Dolendum illud apud Ammianum Marcellinum, et dolendum eo magis, quod Juliano, bipedum nequissimo, factum sit lusui et machinæ ad promovendam ejus impietatem. Indulsit ille “Christianis, ut quisque, nullo vetante, religioni suæ serviret intrepidus. Quod agebat adeo obstinate (inquit historiographus), ut, dissensionis augente licentia, non timeret unanimantem postea plebem: nullas infestas hominibus bestias, ut sunt sibi feralibus odiis plerique Christianorum expertus.” Dolendum talia de Christianis ‘dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli.’

^b Cap. i.

^c Cap. v.

^d Cap. vi.

^e Cap. xi.

Quod scriptores Judaici de rebus aliquibus in sua lege dicunt, “Hæc res est duplex, atque eadem quadruplex;” idem ferè dicere fas est de hac ecclesia, quod ‘bipartita’ erat, eademque ‘quadripartita:’ ‘Bipartita’ ex quadam necessitate, utpote conflata ex duabus nationibus, Judaicâ et Gentilitiâ; ‘Quadripartita’ ex studio partium, æstu contentionis, et abusu magnorum nominum, Pauli, Apollo, Cephæ, Christi. Non mirum, si ista *προσωποληψία* generârit schismata, si illa animositates, si istæ jurgia, si illa litigationes. At quis tam ferox actor, ut reum cogat ad tribunal infidele,—quis cliens tam reus, ut cogatur?

Nonnulla, quæ castigat apostolus in hac epistola, fluxisse videntur planè ex Judaismo; qualia erant, quod viri orarent capite velato; quod procœnia sua haberent ante Eucharistiam; imo, ut probabile, quod incestuosus tam inauditum auderet matrimonium. Ast appellare tribunal Ethnicum, et lites deferre ad judicem infidelem, Judaismus adeo horret, et tam parum decet Christianismum, ut stupendum sit quendam reperiri, qui tale quid vellet vel agere, vel pati. Qualitercunque res gesta est, dupliciter a Corinthiaca est peccatum: et quòd litigarent, quod contra tenorem evangelii,—et quòd illud coram tribunali Ethnorum, quod contra honorem nominis Christiani.

Utrique malo medicinam suam applicat peritissimus medicus in hoc capitulo; at posteriori primum, utpote sollicitus maximè de vulnerato honore evangelii, et de sauciata fama Christianismi non parum anxius, cum bono Heli de periclitante arca Dei tremebundus. Pharmaca sua prima depromit petitque quasi ex ipsorum sinu et pectore, dum ipsa eorum corda et conscientias sic appellat, judiciumque et notitiam in testimonium sic provocat. “An nescitis, quod sancti judicabunt mundum? An nescitis, quod judicabimus angelos?”

In posteriori hac clausula, quam tractandam nobis jam elegimus, quot verba, tot ferè dubia. Quinam scilicet hi angeli,—qui judicandi,—quinam illi qui judicaturi,—et quale et quando futurum hoc judicium,—atque unde hoc dignoscendum Corinthiis? Quæ ut melius expediamus, liceat mentem prioris clausulæ paucis breviterque investigare, unde planior sternetur via, et patebit aditus ad sensum nostræ. Et primum ingenue fateor, me nec omnino absorbere posse, nec satis intelligere sententiam istam, quæ verba illa, “Sancti

judicabunt mundum," sic interpretatur; 'Sancti et electi homines assidebunt Christo in extremo judicio, atque approbata ejus sententia judicabunt improbos.' Quod tale quid futurum vix persuaseris; multo minus persuaseris illud in animo apostoli fuisse hoc in loco. Quippe quod vocabulum 'sancti' latiori longe sensu sumat plane, quam ut stricte denotet homines solum vera sanctitate et gratia locupletatos. O utinam hoc rite satisque observatum! Nam quot, pro dolor! in orbe Christiano schismata, contentiones, querelæ, opiniones vagabundæ, non rite intellecta vera latitudine hujus vocabuli? Nec periculosius aut terribilius sonuit olim Shibboleth Gileaditarum, quam non ita pridem titulus 'Sanctorum.' Et sunt qui, si daretur licentia, sanguinolento commentario edocere vellent, quo sensu "Sancti judicabunt mundum" ipsi sumenda censeant.

In verbis istis commatis primi, "Judicari coram injustis, et non coram sanctis," nemo, quod novi, per 'sanctos' non intelligit 'Christianos,' ut oppositos 'Ethnicis,' vel infidelibus. Et quare non in eadem latitudine et extensione sumenda vox in commate altero? Inæqualius videtur vocabulum illic extendere ad omnes Christianismum professos, et hic extenuare ad vere et realiter 'sanctos' solum. Præsertim vero cum intercedant hæ tres voculæ, Οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι. Eodem significatu est illud capite proxime sequenti, commate 14; "Alioqui filii vestri essent immundi, nunc autem sunt sancti." i. e. 'Aliter essent Ethnicis, nunc autem nati sunt Christiani.' Et loquitur apostolus cum tritissima notione gentis Judaicæ, cui בקדושה 'in sanctitate' idem sonant quod 'intra professionem Judaicæ religionis:' et לא בקדושה 'non in sanctitate' idem quod 'in Ethnicismo.' Instantiæ hujus rei apud scriptores Hebræorum sunt infinitæ; satis sit hæc una. Disputatur semel iterumque a magistris de fœmina Ethnica ad religionem Judaicam jam conversa, sobolem quidem concipiente לא בקדושה 'non in sanctitate,' i. e. 'dum adhuc esset in Ethnicismo:' pariente autem בקדושה "in sanctitate," i. e. 'facta jam proselytissa.'

Detur ergo vocabulo in utroque commate eadem latitudo et significatio, quod efflagitat ratio, et postulat æquitas; et tum sic paraphrazemus commata conjuncta: "Audet aliquis vestrum, habens negotium adversus alterum, judicari coram Ethnicis, et non coram Christianis? Nonne nostis quod Christiani judicabunt mundum?" Id est, 'quod Christiani

erunt principes, rectores, judices, magistratus in mundo.’ “Et vos de rebus vestris leviusculis non judicare inter vosmet ipsos, sed confugere ad tribunalia infidelium?” Atque hæc dignoscere potuerunt Corinthii plane satis ex septimo capite Danielis, si sudor contentionum in oculos stillans eos non obfuscaret; ubi agitur de quatuor imperiis successive dominaturis, et nationes sub jugo suo subacturis: et illis tandem excisis, et dominio eorum expirante, “suscipient regnum Sancti Dei Altissimi^e; regnum et potestas et magnitudo regni, quæ est subter omne cælum datur populo Sanctorum Altissimi.” Nonne consonant propheta et apostolus? Regnabunt Ethnici, inquit propheta, et post eos regnabunt ‘Sancti,’ i. e. ‘judicabunt mundum quatuor monarchiæ, et post eas Christiani judicabunt mundum.’ Et nonne hoc nostis, o Corinthii?

Obiter hoc notemus. Si apostolus a Daniele hæc sua sumserit, quod quidem non sine ratione potest supponi, annon supposuit quartam monarchiam jam expirasse? Saltem an supposuit cum Chiliastis, judicium hoc Sanctis non dandum usque dum ruerit Roma?

Hoc igitur modo fluit ejus argumentatio: ‘Cum determinatum a Deo sit, Christianos regimen mundi aliquando gesturos, atque, ut magistratus et judices, grandia orbis terrarum negotia tractaturos, num vos non pudet controversias vestras de rebus levioribus et trivialibus inter vosmet ipsos non componere, sed in opprobrium et infamiam Christianismi et Evangelii ad tribunalia Ethnica deferre?’ Non quod vel eos retrahere vellet ab obedientia tribunali et magistratui Ethnico ab iis debita, vel auctoritatem aliquam inter se erigere eos vellet usurpatam, et qua autoritas publica Romanorum vilesceret: sed quod retrahere vellet ab inimicitiis, rixis, et dissensionibus, ad concordiam, unanimi-
tatem, et pacem; saltem ut lites suas, si quæ fuerint, intra se comprimant suppressantque, et ne publicent aut patefaciant coram Ethnicis pro spectaculo irrisionis. Et non immerito quæri posset, annon foret regimen aut dominium aliquod civile tunc temporis inter Christianos de suo. Erat in synagogis Judaicis: annon et in ecclesiis Christianis? Sed transimus ad pensum nostrum in clausula atque argumentatione posteriori.

^e Comm. 18. et commate 27.

“An nescitis, quod nos judicabimus angelos?”

Diversitas vocabulorum, ‘Sancti’ et ‘Nos,’ ‘Mundum’ et ‘Angelos,’ plane distinguere videtur et de re, et de personis: ut jam alia res agatur ab ea, quæ in clausula priori, quamvis argumentatio eodem tendat. Qui de ‘bonis angelis’ hæc intelligunt sunt rarissimi, frequentissimi qui de ‘malis.’ Verum et nonnulli qui de malis dici volunt, vel de bonis etiam dici posse concedunt, emollita ista suppositione per hanc distinctionem;—‘quod quamvis angeli boni præmium essenziale receperint ab initio mundi, præmium tamen aliquod accidentale recepturi sunt in ejus fine.’ Quod si datur, parum tamen inde vel sequitur, vel satisfactum est, præmium hoc iis adjudicandum esse per ullos homines. Et nonne captum excedit vel imaginari, qua ratione et quonam modo electi homines judicaturi sint electos angelos, sancti sanctiores? Lazarum judicare angelos illos, qui illum portarunt in sinum Abrahami: et pœnitentes judicare angelos illos, quibus gaudium erit in cœlo ob eorum pœnitentiam?

Sed non opus est huic redargutioni ulterius immorari, cum supponatur potius verba hæc de angelis bonis dici posse, quam ponatur dicta esse,—et de malis dici, consentiunt omnes ferè ad unum. At quare malos non eloquitur apostolus, si velit malos? Quippe quod quemlibet in hac re judicem provocare posset, ut dicat etiam suppresso epitheto ‘mali,’ quinam illi angeli, qui judicandi ab hominibus. Dic, ô Judæe, cum sermo est de angelis per homines judicandos, num arbitraris ‘bonos’ intelligi posse? מלאכי השרת ‘angelos ministerii?’ Nequaquam, inquiet ille, sed מלאכי חבלה ‘angelos perditionis’ potius, et מלאכי מלכיות ‘angelos provinciarum Ethnicarum.’ Nam de Israele judicaturus LXX nationes mundi, et consequenter LXX angelos malos istis nationibus præfectos, audivimus in scholis nostris. At de bonis angelis ita judicandis altum silentium. ‘Et novimus nos,’ inquiet Christianus, ‘a pagina sacra docti, quod sancti quidem judicabunt malos angelos, et Satanam calcabunt sub pedibus; at de bonis tale quid adhuc non didicimus, nec benè novimus unde expiscemur.’

Non adeo opus igitur erat, ut apostolus, quamvis de malis angelis loqueretur, epitheton ‘malos’ adjungeret, cum

quovis quidem interpretante excluderentur ‘boni,’ utpote qui omnino extra sphæram sint istius rei, de qua est sermo.

Concluso igitur ab omnibus malos angelos vel diabolos esse eos qui sunt judicandi,—quinam illi tandem, qui eos judicaturi? Quemnam tecum consocias, ô beatissime apostole, in vocula ‘Nos,’ cum dicis, “Nos angelos judicabimus.” An omnes Christianos in genere? An verè sanctos solum? An eos omnes itidem? An peculiare quosdam de isto numero? Et quonam tempore futurum istud iudicium? Quonam modo?

‘In ultimo die,’ inquiunt non pauci, ‘cum,’ sancti assidentes Christo, judicabunt mundum, tum etiam judicabunt malos angelos.’ Quod si daretur, num non et judicabunt malos angelos ante istam sessionem?

Concepimus ante, sanctos judicare mundum etiam in hoc mundo, ante et usque ad extremum iudicium. Liceat pariter concipere, in hoc mundo quoque malos angelos esse a quibusdam hominibus judicandos. Nam nonne quilibet verè sanctus, et gratia salutari locupletatus, aliquo sensu diabolos judicat? Nonne sanctitate sua eos accusat, precibus flagellat, pietate damnat, fide torquet, et patientia crucifigit?

Verum agere videtur apostolus peculiariùs de apostolis, virisque apostolicis, reliquisque verbi divini ministris, quorum munus et opus est ex officio malos hosce angelos judicare, damnare, exterminare, non solum pro se et in causa propria, ut faciunt reliqui verè sancti, sed in causa aliorum. Et detur venia conjectandi, quod in duabus hisce clausulis apparent et prostant duæ nobiles columnæ ecclesiæ et rei Christianæ,—‘Magistratus Christianus’ in priori, ‘sancti,’ i. e. ‘Christiani, judicabunt mundum:’ et ‘ministerium evangelicum’ in posteriori, ‘nos,’ i. e. ‘ministri,’ “judicabimus angelos.”

“Domine, in nomine tuo subjiciuntur nobis etiam ipsa dæmonia,” inquiunt LXX discipuli, a ministrante sua jam redeuntess. Et num hoc vobis adeo mirum, o beata capita? Ipsum vestrum opus est, ut subjiciatis dæmonia: ex officio vestro est, ut judicetis malos angelos. Propter hoc ipsum emisit vos Dominus vester: et cum vos emitterem, inquit ille, “Vidi Satanam, fulguris instar, de cœlo præci-

^f Luc. x. 17.

pitatum.” Et hoc ipsum est, quod a ministratione vestra est expectandum.

Enumerare hic liceret admirandas istas historias, de triumphatis ab apostolis et discipulis Christi dæmoniis, de diabolis verbo eorum cruciatis, suppressis, ejectis, etiam vel umbra aliqua eorum pulsatis atque exterminatis, “Super languidos deferuntur a corpore Pauli sudaria et semicinctia, et recedebant ab iis languores, et Spiritus nequam egrediebantur^g.” Quærisne adhuc, quinam illi qui iudicaturi malos angelos? “Spiritus immundi clamantes voce magna exhibant e multis^h.” Et quidnam clamant? An Pæana canunt, an victoriam buccinant? An ‘Io triumphe’ vox hæc eorum magna? Imo, ejulatus et lessus, lectus et stridor dentium potius, condemnatorum more maleficorum, et lethali et severæ Judicis sententiæ succumbentium.

Sed de miraculosa hac activitate et potentia ministrorum in judicandis hisce angelis res nostra non est, quippe quod hæc cessatura aliquando, et non practicanda ulterius. Sed alium modum moremque judicii quærimus atque invenimus. Apocalypseos capite vigesimo, statim ab initio, magnus angelus fœderis, Christus, antiquum draconemprehendit, catena vincit, in carcerem conjicit, atque ibi eum detinet per millennium: idque, *ἵνα μὴ πλανήσῃ τὰ ἔθνη*, ne scilicet per idola, oracula, miracula, reliquasque fascinationes suas deciperet Ethnicos amplius, sicut fecerat eousque. Audi hæc, o Chiliasta, atque animadvertite. Non dicitur, quod tu somnias, quod incarceratus est Satan, “ne perturbaret ecclesiam,”—sed incarceratus est Satan, “ne deciperet gentes.” Et quæcunque legimus in historia vel ecclesiastica vel alia, de defectu oraculorum, de extirpatione idololatriæ, de eversione fanorum, de conversione nationum, de vocato ubique gentium nomine veri Dei, insigniter in hæc verba commentantur, “Incarceratus est Satan, ne amplius deciperet Gentiles.”

Intra hoc millennium, a prima introductione evangelii inter gentes initium sumens, exultat Ethnicismus, et miratur totus mundus se factum Christianum. Decidunt turres, et labuntur palatia Satanae, quibus exstruendis artem operamque suam per bina millennia impenderat ante. Sternuntur humi mitiones ejus, et æquantur solo, et decidit ille de throno suo pronus, et fiunt omnia sua prona. Con-

^g Acts, xix. 12.

^h Chap. viii. 7.

clamatum est de Jove, Apolline, Hercule, et toto numinum istorum catalogo. Ruit penitus Diana Ephesina, stupor et stultitia totius Asiæ. Cadit delubrum Delphicum, veneratio et delusio totius Græciæ. Perit Isis, perit mater Berecynthia, pereunt omnes deitates; et sua etiam, o Satana, nisi protinus succurras et opituleris.

Corradit ergo ille et congregat omnem militiam suam et armaturam: persecutorum gladium, Judæorum virulentiam, philosophorum sophismata, magorum præstigias, Apollonium, Plotinum, Celsum, Porphyrium, reliquamque illius scholæ amentiam, et quicquid virium contribuere possunt vel Orcus, vel malitia humana, vel insania. Ast frustra hæc omnia et in cassum; nam pessum eunt indies magis magisque res Satanæ, et dilapidantur omnia ejus ædificia quotidie, ipso interim spectante, fremente, frendente, atque ad auxiliandum suis impotente prorsus et invalido.

Et tamen nullus ad hanc stragem balistarum usus, aut vinearum. Episcopus magica hæc agitatur, non exercitus,—minister, non milites,—præcones evangelii, non prælia nec legiones. Nullus hic gladius aut arcus aut hasta, nihil hic ferri aut armorum. Ministri nescio qui Evangelii inopes, egeni, destituti, afflicti, et male habiti, voce tantum et verbo hæc omnia Satanæ diruunt, sternunt, et sub pedibus conculcant. Sic corruerunt olim mœnia Jerichuntina, non per bellicos arietes quassata, sed clangore solum cornuum arietinorum. Nam, ut hic apostolus in altera ad hos Corinthios epistola, “Arma militiæ nostræ non sunt carnalia, sed per Deum potentia ad destructionem munitionum, consilia evertendo, atque omnem altitudinem, quæ se attollit adversus cognitionem Dei.”

Oh quam feliciter mutata jam rerum facies et mundi! En templum jam sacrum, ubi nuper fanum profanum; oracula jam veritatis, ubi non ita pridem Apollo mendax; jam minister evangelii, ubi dudum Pythonissa. Hodie cultus divinus, ubi heri idolum. Sacramentum jam eucharisticum, ubi olim sacrificium humani sanguinis. Verbo omnia, regnat jam Christus, et verbo ejus vincitur, vincitur, et incarceratur Satan, atque evanescunt omnes ejus deceptiones, fascinationes, et phantasmata. Et jam dicat ille ipse, quinam illi, quorum est judicare ‘malos angelos?’

At vah! mutata tandem iterum rerum facies æque infelicitate. Redeunt post hanc serenitatem nebulæ et caligines,

et desinit dies, adeo lucidus, tandem in tenebris et nocte dira. “Cum consummati fuerint mille isti anni (inquit Apocalypticus), solvetur Satan e carcere suo, et exhibit, et seducet gentes, quæ sunt super quatuor angulos terræ.” Solutus est et exiit et seduxit, et per Papismum, ut reliqua omittamus, introduxit iterum Ethnicismum. Atque infelici, nescio qua, rotatione revolvitur mundus sub Papatu in pristinam suam noctem et Paganismum. Jam redit cultus sculptilium, et divorum et divarum; reviviscunt jam oracula, traditionum scilicet et Pontificiæ infallibilitatis. Repit e spelunca sua larva miraculorum, et partim monstris magicis, partim mendaciis artificiose fabrefactis, captiva ducitur credulitas hominum, et excæcantur corda oculique. Nihil modo nisi tenebræ et caligo, implicita fides, cæca obedientia, atque ignorantia ad stuporem profunda, devotionis Pontificiæ vere mater.

Crederes jam Romam religionem Romuli, Numæ, Hetruscorum iterum induisse. Crederes Caligulam solio Romano iterum insidere, hominem cultum divinum sibi arrogantem, ac “sese efferentem supra omne quod dicitur Deus, aut Numen.” Crederes revixisse atque in scenam iterum prodisse Pontifices, Flamines, Augures, Virgines Vestales, et cæteram turbam istius impietatis. Videres denique Romam ut olim armis, sic jam artibus, deceptionibus, et excæcatione hominum nationes subjugare, mundumque ipsum videres retrogrado infaustoque motu repedare in Ethnicismum, Scythismum, Satanismum. Involvitur jam orbis dira nocte; sed num æterna? Spissis tenebris; sed an durabunt in sæcula? Nullus unquam redditurus diem phosphorus? Aurora nunquam? An dominaturus semper princeps tenebrarum?

Illuxit quidem tandem pater luminum regionibus hisce nostris, finitimisque: evangelium dissipavit noctem, abegit tenebras, et “per viscera misericordiæ Dei nostri visitavit nos oriens ex alto.” Sperandum jam erat fugari Satanam in antrum suum, atque in carcerem pristinum amandari. Quod faciunt leunculi¹, id jam de hoc leone etiam expectari posset, “Catuli leonum rugientes, ut rapiant, et quærant escam, oriente sole congregati sunt, et in latibula sua se recipiunt.” At non sic hic leonum leo. Ambit ille adhuc et rugit et decipit; et vix credas tale quid esse in rerum natura, quod dicatur vel ‘potestas evangelii’ vel ‘evangelium.’

Circumspicite enim regiones hasce Europæas, ut cæteras mundi omittamus; et quantum adhuc Papismi,—quantum,

¹ Psalmo civ.

quod malum auget, Jesuitismi,—quantum hæresium et schismatum,—quantum atheismi et blasphemiarum,—quantum denique tenebrarum et vitiorum !

Annon solutus adhuc Satan as et ambit ? Oh ! ubi jam ‘ magnus ille angelus ’ cum catena sua ? Ubi cœlestis aliquis lictor, qui latronem hunc errabundum, et non emendabilem perduellionemprehendat, vinciat, et in carcerem detrudat ? Quid de hoc sperandum, et quando hoc tandem futurum ? Vereor ne locum nimis hic habeat lugubre illud Psaltæ, “ Signa nostra non videmus ; non est ulterius aliquis propheta, nec est inter nos qui novit usquequo.” Usquequo Domine, usquequo ? Responso Servatoris contenti nos simus et promisso, “ Vestrum non est nosse tempora et momenta ; ” atque, “ Ero vobiscum ad finem sæculi.” Nostrum est nosse munus nostrum et officium,—intus et intimatius recognoscere, quid sit esse minister evangelii.

Evocat nos Deus, per officium nostrum ministeriale, in luctam et prælium cum ipso Goliatho, idque non nostri ipsorum gratia solum, sed animarum et gregum nostrorum etiam nobis commissorum. Ejiciendus est Satan as ex eorum mentibus:—id curæ nostræ incumbit. Evellendi sunt agni ex faucibus ursi et leonis:—hæc concertatio nobis demandata. Liberandæ animæ eorum ex potestate diaboli in beatam libertatem filiorum Dei:—nostrum est, quantum fieri potest, id curare. Videmus itaque in quam arenam descendimus, et cum quali antagonista nobis colluctandum. Acuendi animi ex ipso periculo et rei difficultate. Fortiter dimicandum, quia dimicandum cum fortibus. Et forti isto fortior nobis aderit, si adsit nobis conscientia, vigilantia, et industria. Christum vehimus et doctrinam ejus, gladium ejus vibramus, et causam contra Satanam agimus. Agamus sedulo, et viriliter contendamus ; et talibus ausis animisque promisit ille se affuturum.

Adsis nobis, Domine Jesu, et ministerio nostro. Concede propitius, ut officio nostro attente invigilemus, verbum tuum rite et ex pura conscientia distribuentes, et vita proba exemplar imitabile animabus, nobis commissis, præferentes, auxilio tuo roborati, atque animati Spiritu, de triumphato Satana pro nobis ipsis aliisque coronam tandem reportemus immarcescibilem. Idque per et propter merita tua, atque ex infinita misericordia tua, beatissime Servator, cui, cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto, sit omnis honor, laus, et gloria, in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

A SERMON^a,

PREACHED BEFORE

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

AT THEIR PUBLIC FAST,

HOLDEN IN MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER,

FEB. 24, 1646-47.

*To the Honourable House of Commons, assembled in
Parliament.*

‘**V**ESTRUM est imperare, nostrum obsequi:’ Your commands, wrapped up in your desires, I have desired to obey, both to the pulpit and the press. Not that I can tender any thing either to your ears or eyes, which may be worth your acceptance; but that I cannot but most readily tender obedience when you command,—and labour to serve you, when you call for my service. The subject of that hour’s discourse that I had then before you, and of this book, which is the same,—was very well worthy your eyes and ears, if the managing of it had but fallen into a skilful hand:—for what more needful duty to be urged or to be practised, than heart-communication? But according to my poverty I was then ready to offer, and you were pleased to accept; and I hope the like acceptance now. I humbly recommended the words then spoken to your hearts, and so I do now the same written: and as I desire to present them now written to your hands, so do I myself, and all I am or can, at your feet; as

Your poor humble devoted servant, J. L.

PSALM IV. 4.

Commune with your own hearts.

WHEN I communed with mine own heart concerning what subject to discourse upon before this honourable and great audience, at this time,—methought this text, when it came to

^a Not in the English folio-edition.

hand, would be very suitable, both for the auditory, and for the occasion, and for the age wherein we live, and for all the age that we have to live.

First, For this honourable auditory : for how fitting is it, that they that spend so much time in needful conferences among themselves, about the affairs of church and state, should sometimes be minded of spending some time in the as needful conferences with their own hearts, about the state and affairs of their own souls.

Secondly, For this solemn occasion : for how impossible is it, that we should either deal with God, or with these weighty things that we have in hand, as we ought to do,—unless we commune with our own hearts, concerning ourselves, and concerning God, and concerning these things ; with whom, and about which, we have to deal.

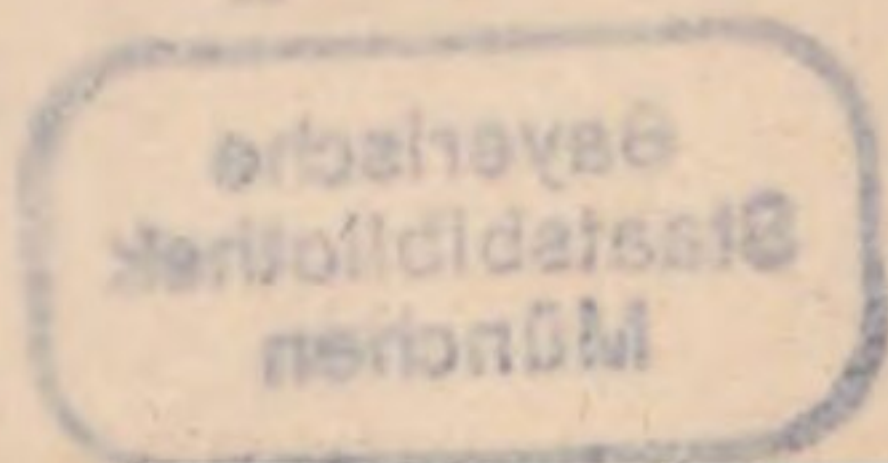
Thirdly, For this age wherein we live : for how proper an answer and a check is this text, for all the inquisitiveness and censoriousness, that so much raveth and rageth amongst us in these times :—to answer inquisitiveness, by sending men to inquire after their own hearts ; and to check censoriousness, by minding men to examine their own selves.

And, lastly, For our whole age that we have to live : for while we carry our hearts about us, we should carry this duty with us,—I am sure we carry the obligation upon us,—of communing with our own hearts. Thus doth the text suit to us, to our present occasion, and to our present times : the business is, if our heart would but as well and truly suit to the text, and then a perfect harmony and unison were made. Now the Lord so time my tongue to your hearts, and your hearts to the text, and all of us to the duty that the text holdeth out, that I may speak a word in season,—you receive it seasonably,—and all of us practise it all the season of our lives ; that I may have cause to bless God that I met with such an audience,—you have cause to bless God that you met with such a text,—and all of us find cause to acknowledge, that God hath been amongst us, at this time, of a truth. And so, in his name, let us fall to work.

This Psalm, by the terror of it, doth seem to be made upon the rebellion of Sheba, the son of Bichri, as the Psalm preceding is plain, by the title of it, to have been made upon the rebellion of Absalom, which instantly preceded that rebellion. The story of both you have in the seventeenth,

eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth chapters of the second of Samuel, and some references to both you have in divers passages of this Psalm, as it goes along. In the first verse, David speaks to God, who had enlarged him before, in his former troubles, caused by his own son, to relieve him now in his present distress, caused by the son of Bichri. In the second verse he speaketh to ^{לְ}בָנֵי the men of arms, and the men of dignity; that they would no longer despise the glory of his kingdom which God hath chosen, nor follow after a kingdom of vanity and falsehood, as was Absalom's and Sheba's. In the fourth verse, he speaks against the cause and occasion of the present conspiracy; namely, the anger between the men of Israel, and the men of Judah, mentioned 2 Sam. xix. 43, where the words of the men of Israel are fierce, but the words of the men of Judah were fiercer. This anger he seeketh to calm, by that calm admonition in the beginning of the verse, 'Be angry, but sin not:' for so might the word be very fitly rendered, and so it is rendered by the LXX, by the Arabic, and others; and, as may be well supposed, by the apostle, Eph. iv. 26. And in the seventh verse he speaketh out his own comfort and confidence, collected and taken up, upon the observation of a special providence: that since the time that corn, and wine, and oil, had increased to him, and been abundantly sent him by Nahash, Machir, and Barzillai, as it is recorded, 2 Sam. xvii. 27, 28, the Lord had put gladness into his heart; for now he perceived that the Lord and his own people began to look after him in his distress.

If we thus apply the Psalm unto this occasion, then we know to what persons to apply the text,—namely, to persons now in great divisions and differences among themselves: to persons, in fiery contestation, and in heat of blood, about the man that should govern, and the manner of government, even to persons so parallel to the temper, or distemper rather, of our present generation, that I would we could as aptly take out the lesson of the text, as we and those persons do resemble one another; and as the text doth fitly suit both with them and us. But I shall not be curious in this parallel and application, since the text so properly fitteth all persons, and the lesson in it suiteth all occasions. For there is none among men, nor no occasions that a man can be about, to whom and when it may not be proper and perti-



nent to read this lesson, "Commune with your own heart." In the original it is literally or syllabically thus, אָמְרוּ בְּלִבְבְּכֶם, 'Say in your heart:' and so it is closely followed by the Greek: and so it is taken by the Chaldee: the Greek reads it with some difference of the mood, indeed, and with one word added to the clause, but to such a sense as this, for it readeth thus, 'What you say in your hearts:' the Chaldee renders the text, and the words following it, thus largely, 'Say your prayers with your mouth, and your petitions in your heart, and pray upon your beds, and remember the day of death evermore.'

But I shall not trouble you with such varieties of glosses and interpretations, which I might do copiously; I shall spare that labour, since the words themselves do speak their own sense, and our English hath very well and properly construed and interpreted them, "Speak with, or commune with, your own hearts."

It is not every speaking in the heart that the Psalmist here engageth to; for the fool speaks in heart, and saith in his heart, "There is no God^a:" the epicure speaks in his heart, and saith, "I shall never be moved^b:" the atheist speaks in his heart, and saith, "Tush, God hath forgotten, he will never see it^c." And these persons to whom David speaketh, if we hit the occasion of the Psalm aright, were ready enough to say in their heart, 'We will none of David, and nothing to do with the son of Jesse:' but the text enjoineth such a conference in the heart, as that the matters betwixt a man and his own heart, may be debated to the very utmost,—that the heart may be so put to it in communing with it, as that it might speak its very bottom. Nor shall I trouble you with the divers acceptations of the word *heart*, when it is used to signify the spiritual part of man, or when it is taken in a spiritual sense; else I might show you that sometimes it is taken for 'the whole frame of the soul;' sometimes for the one faculty, 'the understanding;' sometimes for the other faculty, 'the will;' and sometimes for that which I may call a middle faculty, 'the conscience;' but your own hearts will readily tell you, upon the reading of the text, that the word heart in it, doth mean the last-mentioned, 'the conscience:' and that communing with a man's own heart, is nothing else, but 'searching and trying a man's own conscience.' And you

^a Psal. xiv. 1.

^b Psal. x. 6.

^c Psal. x. 11.

will easily see, that the words hold out this needful and useful lesson to us : That it is a duty of most special concernment, for every one of us to hold serious communication and clear intelligence and acquaintance with his own heart. I may well repeat it, for it had need be inculcated again and again : and as that golden saying, “ Brethren, let us love one another,” is reported to have been ever in the mouth of John the evangelist,—so had this as golden a saying, “ Brethren, commune with your own hearts,” as much need to be ever in the mouth of the ministers ; and this truth ever in the hearts of the people.

That it is a duty of most special concernment for every one of us, to hold serious communication, and clear intelligence and acquaintance with his own heart.

This must be the subject of my discourse ; and for the proving and clearing of this position, you see there are before me these four things :—1. To show you that communication and intelligence may be had and held with a man’s own heart ; this *de posse*. 2. That such a communication and intelligence must be ; this *de jure*. 3. That this communication and intelligence with a man’s own heart is to be clear and serious ; this *de fieri*. And, 4. That such a serious and clear communication and intelligence with a man’s own heart is of special concernment ; this *de facto*. I shall not be very large in these particulars, because it is but to prove four things, that, I suppose, are already granted. I shall apply myself the rather to be more copious in application.

First, That it is possible for a man to hold a conference and communication with his own heart, I should not need to prove it, if you would but put it to proof within your own-selves. And as he ingeniously proved that there is motion, against one that denied it,—by rising out of his chair, and walking up and down ; so your hearts, without me, would make this assertion clear, if you would but seriously and soundly put them to it, that they and you might confer together. I doubt not but many in this great congregation have done this already, and have had many a holy and solemn discourse with their own hearts, and conclude the truth of this matter by their own experience as soon as I name it. But as for such as have not had this practice, nor cannot conclude this by experience,—that never hear nor feel their conscience speak a word to them : should there come over

them some dreadful judgment, or should there come before them some horrid apparitions, or should there come unto them a sure message of an instant death, as there did to Hezekiah; then, if they will but turn their face a little to the wall, retire their thoughts a little to their hearts, they may chance hear their hearts speak something to them, which, it may be, they will like but ill, and there, it may be, they would feel by experience that there is something in them, that would have talked with them heretofore, if they would have talked with it.

But for the better clearing of this to you at this time,—at one time or other all must have experience of the truth of it in a better manner or a worse,—give me leave a little to recall you a little, first, to the viewing of some places of Scripture; and then to the viewing of yourselves within: or to the consideration of the frame and fabric of your own souls.

First, You may see this asserted even by the experience of him in his own particular, that gives this lesson here to all in general, in Psalm lxxvii. 6: “I commune with mine own heart, and my spirit maketh diligent search.” Here David and his heart are talking together; and see what his heart saith unto him in Psalm xvi. 7: “My reins instruct me in the night-season.” For that the heart and reins do signify the same thing, when they are taken in a spiritual sense, and that they, so taken, do signify the conscience,—is a matter so copiously evident in Scripture, that I need not to use any instances to prove it.

And so in John viii. 9, when our Saviour bids, ‘Who-soever is without sin, cast the first stone’ at the woman taken in adultery, it is said of the company present, that ἐλεγχόμενοι ὑπὸ τῆς συνειδήσεως, they were ‘convicted of their own conscience.’ The word in the Greek doth properly signify ‘a conviction by argument:’ there was something within them that over-argued them, and talked and disputed them clean away. And so in Rom. ii. 15: “The consciences of the very heathen spake, as it were, within them,” and gave in evidence either for them or against them, their thoughts either accusing or excusing, μεταξύ ἀλλήλων,—‘inter se invicem,’ as the Vulgar Latin,—as in a discourse among themselves.

But, in the second place, consider and study yourselves a little within, and you shall find that the Lord hath made every one of our souls of such a frame and fabric, as that

there is an echo in them : the soul able to propose questions to itself, and to give itself an answer, like Sisera's mother in the fifth of Judges, ver. 28, 29 ; she asketh, " Why stay the wheels of my son's chariot ? And her wise ladies answered her, nay, she answered herself."

To this purpose may I apply that phrase in Deut. iv. 39 : " Know, therefore, this day *והשבת אל לבבך* and make a return or an answer to thine own heart." And to this purpose I cannot but apply that gloss of the Chaldee paraphrast upon Gen. ii. 7, the latter part of that verse ; " And God made man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and *that in* man became a speaking spirit." Most true in every parcel. That that God breathed into man, became a spirit, or a spiritual substance ; and it became a speaking spirit, enabling men to talk and speak one to another : and it became a speaking spirit within him, able also to speak and confer with its ownself.

There are three parts of the soul, as I may so express it, of distinct and several notion and consideration, as there are three things in the sun,—light, heat, and motion : so in the soul, the understanding, the will, and the conscience. The conscience lies, as it were, in the midst of the other two, as the centre of the soul, or 'the midst of the heart,' as Prov. iv. 21 : whither there is conflux of whatsoever is good or evil in either of the other faculties.

Now either of those hath its discourse with itself, and conscience, if it act aright, hath its conference with them both.

1. The intellective faculty of the soul, or the understanding, doth, in a manner, talk to the will, when it offers it good or evil things to its choice or refusal ; and it doth, in manner, talk to itself, in every reflex it exerciseth, when it doth not only attain to the knowledge of things, but is also able to say to itself, 'I know, I know them ;' as 1 John ii. 3, " Hereby we know, that we know him."

2. The elective faculty of the soul, or the will, doth confer and debate with and within itself, upon every election or refusal, when it doth either entertain or lay aside what is presented to it by the understanding, choosing, or refusing, upon such a discourse and argumentation with itself as this ; 'I choose it, because it is good,—and I refuse it, because it is evil.'

3. But 'the participle faculty' of the soul, as I may so call

it, or the conscience,—as it is lodged between the two other, so it receives something from both, and returns something to both: from the intellective faculty it receives knowledge and memory, and it is told by them that such and such things ought to be done, or they ought not to be done: and then it makes an answer back to them by conviction, and saith, ‘I have done such things,’ or ‘I have not done them.’ From the other faculty, or the will, it receives movedness and affecting: and when that faculty of the soul is moved or affected with the grievous or fearful case of another; the conscience answers, ‘Why this case is mine own,’ and makes a return to the affections by compunction, and says, ‘Alas! what have I done in thus doing?’

And thus doth the soul hold a debate, conference, and communication, within and with its ownself: and thus, in the first place, is that particular somewhat cleared, *de posse*, that it is possible for a man to confer and commune with his own heart.

Secondly, That this is not only a possibility, but a duty,—not only a may be, but a must be,—the text is enough to prove, if we had no more to prove it: for the Holy Ghost doth here command the thing; and where the Holy Ghost commands, it creates a duty.

But we find this also enjoined again and again in other places of Scripture, though under other terms and expressions. As 1 Cor. xi. 28: “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat,” &c. And 2 Cor. xiii. 5: “Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith,” &c. And that in Lam. iii. 40: “Let us search and try our ways,” &c. And that in Zeph. ii. 1; as it is rendered by some *התקוששו וקושו*, ‘Excute vosmet iterumque excute,’ as some express it; “Fan yourselves, and again fan yourselves:”—and divers other places, that speak not, indeed, the very same language with the text, yet speak the very same sense, and command the same thing, as a duty for every one of us, to commune with our own hearts.

This duty lay upon Adam in his innocency, and so should have continued upon him in that estate, had he continued in it. For God turned him into the garden with a natural law written in his heart, and a positive law uttered in his ears. This positive law directed him only as concerning eating or not eating: but what must he be directed by,

as concerning his general conversation besides? Why, Adam, commune with thine own heart, and that will tell thee.

This duty lay also upon him, when he was fallen : and so doth it upon every one of us, though under the same fall with him. For though the purity, integrity, activity, and vigilancy, of our consciences be utterly gone by our fall and sin ; yet is not conscience itself utterly gone. It is so essential a part of the soul, that a soul cannot be a soul without it ; and it is so inseparable a part of man, that even death itself cannot divorce him and his conscience. So that though we have not such a conscience as Adam had before his fall, yet have we a conscience ; and though we cannot have recourse to it, upon the same terms that he might have had to his,—namely, as to a certain rule ; yet may we, and ought we, to have recourse to it upon other terms ; namely, as being a witness, judge, and monitor, in the midst of us.

I might show how the nearness of our hearts unto us doth challenge this duty ; and how the dearness of our hearts unto us should claim it and enforce it : but I will conclude this, as Paul to Agrippa : ‘Honourable and Christian auditory, do you believe that this is a duty? I know you believe it : and I would that I, and all that hear me this day, could as readily comply with the duty, as we cannot but readily confess it, if we will but commune with our own hearts about it.’

Thirdly ; The practice of this duty, or the communication with our hearts, is to be serious,—and the intelligence and acquaintance we hold with them, to be clear ; as the woman’s scrutiny for her groat in the parable, to search and sift every corner of the heart ; according to that of Solomon, Prov. xx. 27, “The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.”

You may observe two arguments used Gen. xlv ; the one by Joseph, and the other by his steward, to impress it upon the sons of Jacob, that a serious and true search would be made for that silver-bowl that they had stolen : the one taken from the cup itself ; “Is not this the cup in which my master drinketh, and for which he will make a very^a trying search?” and the other from Joseph himself ; “Know ye not, that a man of my authority could make a very trying search?” Two such kind of topics may I take up for the

^a כִּנְחָשׁ כִּנְחָשׁ, experiendo experietur.

proof of the thing in hand, that the conference with our own heart ought to be with all seriousness : the one taken from the matter of that conference ; and the other, from the temper of our hearts.

1. The matter whereof we should or can commune with our hearts, is most serious, and, ‘ sancta sanctè,’ it must be most seriously done : as the two men that went to Emmaus, communed sadly, because they communed of a very sad matter, Luke xxiv. 17.

The only matters that a man can or doth commune with his own conscience about, are the matters and concernments of the soul : for as the conscience lodgeth in the very centre of the soul, as I showed before, so there are the proper and the most close transactions of the soul managed. It is the centre, as was said before, whither, if there be any good in the soul, it flows ; and what evil there is in the soul, it hath its conflux thither also.

The understanding, in its actings by knowledge and memory ; and the will, in its actings by affections and desires, practiseth upon and about things of an extrinsical and foreign cognizance, as well upon things of a man’s own concernment ; but the conscience meddleth only with one’s own concernment, and that concernment of the soul : as natural affection, in the proper sense, or affection of a relative nature, moves not, nor acts not, unless the thing presented to it be of its own interest. As a father or mother, seeing the misery or miscarriage of other men’s children, their affections may be moved with it ; but natural relative affections stir not, till the story comes home to their own children. So is it with conscience ; the knowledge knoweth natural, politic, foreign, alien things, and the memory retains them : so the affections are taken up with foreign, alien, natural, politic matters, and are moved with them : but the conscience moves not, unless the concernment come home to a man’s own soul, and the matter reach thither.

As I might exemplify in Achan : if his conscience had been awake to have done its part, his carnal reason and knowledge told him, the wedge of gold, and the Babylonish garment, would be a rich prize, and mend his estate very well : then his will and affections answer, ‘ I would I had them,’ and they consent and put on to compass them. Here are extrinsic businesses only in agitation with these facul-

ties about wealth and growing rich. But then a good conscience, if it had been there, would have stepped in and answered, ‘Ay! but how will this comply with the good of my soul?’ And so might I instance in other things; as in men’s desiring riches, honours, pleasures; their carnal understandings and wills, like Haman and Zeresh, cast and conspire, and consent together, to compass what they desire,—and it will be so brave for their port, so contentive to their persons, so beneficial to their posterity. These are fine things, and easily swallowed; but they are but outside things, there is not a word yet of the consequent and concernment to the soul: that conscience must take into consideration, or the consideration of that is quite laid aside. That is proper for conscience only to act about, and to take to conscience and consultation.

And thus it appeareth that our conference with our own hearts had need to be serious, because the things that we can confer with them about, are only of a most serious and weighty nature; viz. the things of the soul only.

And, secondly, The needfulness of such a serious conference will appear also upon the consideration of the deceitfulness of our own hearts. Talk close and home, and have clear intelligence with them, or else they will deceive us, they will tell us a thousand lies. As he in story: who hearing a man talk to himself as he walked along the highway, and questioning whom he talked withal, was answered, ‘I talk to myself;’ why then, saith he, ‘Cave ne cum malo loquaris,’ ‘Take heed thou talk not with one that is naught.’ You may resolve upon this, whensoever you come to commune with your own heart, that you have to deal with a very cheat and a Jesuit, a Proteus, a juggler; that, if you put it not home to it, will not tell you one true story amongst a thousand. I speak this by the sad experience of a base, false, cozening, and deceitful heart of mine own: and I believe other men’s hearts are of the same mettle. O wretched heart, thou hast deceived me, and I have been deceived; thou hast been too strong for me, and hast prevailed. But I speak this also upon the warrant of him that knoweth all hearts, even the Spirit of God, that discerneth the things of the spirit: Jer. xvii. 9; “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” Ah, sad climax! deceitful, and deceitful above all things,—wicked, and

desperately wicked, and so bad of both, that who can know it? Such another miserable gradation ye have expressed concerning the very same subject, in Gen. vi. 5, "The frame of the thoughts of man's heart was wholly evil, was only evil, and was evil continually."

There is a mutual or reciprocal cozenage betwixt a man and his own heart, mentioned in Scripture: sometimes a man deceives his own heart; as James i. 26, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart." Sometimes a man's heart deceives him; Isa. xlv. 20, "A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" And thus Manasseh against Ephraim, and Ephraim against Manasseh, and both against Judah. Sometimes the man cozens his heart, and sometimes his heart cozens him; and always both these cozenings help to undo the poor soul.

Sometimes a man cozens his conscience with carnal reasonings, as Achan did his, "I shall be enriched, and I shall not be discovered:" and as the rich man in the gospel did his, "My purse is full, and my barns are full; therefore, soul, take thine ease:" and so many and many man undoes his own soul by cozening his conscience with the bribery of carnal reasoning,—'I am yet in health, I may yet repent time enough, I shall not see evil,' and the like, &c.

And, on the other hand, the conscience is as ready to cozen a man, and to tell him, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace."

Sometimes it deceives a man with half answers, as Ananias and Sapphira would have done Peter, with half the money: and makes a man taken up with conviction only, which the wickedest man under heaven may have, and makes him to think that he hath sorrow enough for his evil actions, when he hath only remembrance of them.

Sometimes it deceives a man with false answers, as Jacob deceived his father with kid's flesh instead of venison; and makes a man believe he hath compunction enough for his evil actions, when he hath only some gripes of self-love, or a fear of punishment; as was Ahab's humiliation.

Sometimes it deceives him with silence, and he thinks all is well, because it tells him nothing ill: as the fool is counted wise, when he is silent; and the atheist thinks God

like himself when he holds his peace^d: so many a poor deceived soul thinks his conscience a good conscience, and himself in a good case, because he hears no otherwise from his conscience,—for it is silent, and says nothing at all to him.

Thus, as it is in the Italian proverb,

Con arte e con inganno

Si vive il mezzo anno ;

Con inganno e con arte

Si vive l' altra parte :

“With deceit and cozenage men live half the year, and with cozenage and deceit they live the other half:” one part of our lives we deceive our own hearts, and another part of our lives our hearts deceive us: and thus our lives go on in a mist and cloud of delusion, we deceiving and deceived, and all because we hold not communication with our own hearts close enough, and put them not to it home, as Ahab did Micaiah, to tell us the truth, and nothing else, in the name of the Lord: and thus we see very good reason, why the communication with our hearts should be serious,—and the intelligence we hold with them, clear.

Fourthly; That this is a duty of special concernment, is even proved already, ere we are aware, in the things that have been spoken: but give me leave to add one or two things more: as,—

1. That it is a duty of so great concernment, that it is naturally the first duty of all other of the second table: for, as to know God is, properly and methodically, the first duty of the first and great commandment,—so is this, as properly and methodically, the first duty of the second: for as it is impossible to love God as we should, unless we first know him; so it is impossible, we should love our neighbour as ourselves, unless we first know ourselves.

2. It is a ‘sine qua non,’ a duty or a matter, without which we can neither hear any condition as we should, nor perform any duty as we ought. As a golden thread was to be twisted with every twine and thread of the ephod and breast-plate, or it was not rightly made; so, if this action of communing with our own hearts be not entwisted with every one of our actions, we can neither undergo any thing, nor perform any thing, as becomes us to do.

First, How is it possible for a man either to bear prosperity, or endure adversity, unless he seriously talk with his

^d Psal. l. 21.

own heart about his own deservings, and about these conditions. This was the way of David, that gives the counsel in the text: when great prosperity and happiness accrue unto him, in the promise that the Lord makes to him and to his house, he sits down, and talks with his own heart, about his deservings of no such thing; “Who am I, or what is my father’s house^e?” And, on the other hand, when great adversity lights upon him, and he is fallen into perplexity, the way he takes, is to sit down, and, amongst other things, to have serious conference with his own soul, about the bearing of such a thing; “Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me^f?”

Secondly, As impossible is it to do any duty aright, and as we ought to do, unless the practice of this duty go before it, or along with it. Be they the spiritual duties we owe to God, or the external duties we owe to his worship, or the conscientious duties we owe to our own hearts, we cannot possibly perform them aright, unless this salt be with the sacrifice,—unless we commune with our own hearts about them.

1. As for the spiritual duties we owe to God: as, to serve him with a perfect heart, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9: to walk before him with an humble heart, Micah vi. 8: to offer to him a contrite heart, Psal. li. 17: to draw near to him with a true heart, Heb. x. 22: to receive his word with a good heart, Luke viii. 15: and, one for all, to love him with all our heart, Deut. vi. 5:—how is it possible, we should rightly do these things, if we have not acquaintance with our own heart? What difference is there betwixt serving a strange God, and serving the true God with a strange heart? Nadab and Abihu are punished for offering strange fire to the true God, as well as Ahaz and Manasseh, for offering true fire to a false god. Let me use the style of the apostle, “How can men believe in him, of whom they have not heard?” so, how can men serve him aright and heartily, with a heart they do not know?

2. As for the external duties that we owe to God’s worship; as our hearts are to go along with them, or else our performing of them is nothing,—so are we to commune with our own hearts upon them, and in them, or else we shall never bring our hearts unto them. It was very pertinently written over the temple-door at Delphos, Γνώθι σεαυτὸν,

^e 2 Sam. vii. 18. ^f Psal. xliii. 5.

‘Know thyself;’ for certainly no temple-duty can be well performed without such a knowledge.

Canst thou pray without acquaintance with thine own heart? The very Hebrew word that signifieth praying, tells thee, No: for the word *הִתְפַּלֵּל* that is commonly used to signify ‘to pray,’ doth properly signify, ‘to judge’ a man’s self. Thinkest thou, thou canst receive the sacrament aright, without the exercise of this duty? The apostle tells thee, Nay; but “let a man first examine himself, and then let him eat^g.”

The like might I say of singing the Psalms, which must be done with the spirit; 1 Cor. xiv. 15: of believing, which must be done with the heart; Rom. x. 10: of repenting, of trembling at the word, and of other such duties,—how is it possible they should be done by us as they should, if we have no acquaintance and communication with our own hearts, how they stand to them and in them?

And, lastly, As for the duties we owe to our own hearts; as, washing them, Jer. iv. 14; watching them, Prov. iv. 23; humbling them, Lev. xxvi. 4; and the like;—who can do them, but he that confers, and is in acquaintance, with his own heart? “Wash my heart! Why, I never asked it, nor ever took notice, how soiled and polluted it was.—Watch it! Why, I never observed, nor it never told me of, any danger it was in, nor what need it had to be watched and looked after. Nor can I go about to humble it, for it and I were never so well acquainted, as I to know how hard, how proud, how unhumbed, it is.” Must not these be answers of him, that holds not intelligence with his own heart? And must not this want of intelligence needs spoil the offices, that a man oweth to it? And thus you see, in the fourth place, the great concernment of this duty of heart-communication. And thus, though thus rudely and unskilfully, have I somewhat cleared the truth of the doctrine, in clearing these four particulars. And now shall I crave leave, in three particulars more, to make use of it, and to bring it home to ourselves by application.

First; By way of just reproof of those, that neglect and forget so special a duty, and of so special a concernment.

Secondly; By way of exhortation and persuasion to every one to set seriously to the practice of this duty.

And, thirdly, By recommending to you some queries

and interrogatories to propose to your hearts to practise this duty with them upon.

First, then, since it is thus, that communing with a man's own heart is so special, and so important, a duty,—it shows that they justly deserve to be reprov'd, that neglect this duty, and hold no acquaintance with their own hearts at all. And because I will be sure to aim this reproof aright, I shall, in the first place, begin with myself and mine own heart; for there is a subject that I know, and am sure, deserves reprov'ing. It may be, I shall find some company in this congregation, that will join with me in this matter, and that will find my case theirs, and that will make my words to be their own. There is a pathetical story of Origen,—that when he had fallen into a foul apostasy, and, after some recovery from it, came into a congregation, and was desired to preach; he took the Bible, and opened it accidentally at the fiftieth Psalm, and his eye fell first to read these words in the sixteenth and seventeenth verses of it:—"But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee?" Upon reading the words, he remembered his own fall; and, instead of preaching, he fell a weeping, and wept so bitterly, that he caused all the congregation to weep with him.

The fore-part of the story is too much mine own case: I would you would make the latter part of it somewhat yours. I profess I cannot read the words of my text, but, like Pharaoh's butler, after a long forgetfulness, I must confess my fault of that forgetfulness to-day: and I cannot speak what I have said upon this text, but that I must subscribe to the woman of Tekoa's words in her speech to David,—that I speak these things as one guilty myself. Is any one here, whose heart hath been a stranger to him, as my heart hath been? and is any one's heart here, as my heart is, desirous to be sensible and to be humbled for this our strangeness? Come, give me thine hand, and let us join hand in hand, and heart to heart, to give glory to God by confession, and to take shame to ourselves in a just reproof, for that we have so much neglected so great a duty, and for that we have so greatly forgotten so near a concernment.

Behold, beloved, among yourselves, and regard and

wonder marvellously; for I can tell you a sad story in your ears, which ye will not believe, though it be told you. I have lived these forty years, and somewhat more, and carried my heart in my bosom all this while, and yet my heart and I are as great strangers and as utterly unacquainted, as if we had never come near one another:—And is there none, in this congregation, that can say the like?

He spake very good sense, and much piety in it, that complained that he had lived so many years above threescore, and had been a student in the Scripture all his time, and yet could never attain to take out that lesson in the first verse of the nine-and-thirtieth Psalm,—‘That he should not offend with his tongue.’ But it is to speak a thing of monstrousness and amazement, to say, that a man should live so long a time as I have done,—nay, as some do, to threescore, to fourscore years,—and yet never to get into acquaintance and to communication with their own hearts! who could believe such a report? and yet, how common is this amongst men!

I remember it was a wonder to me, before I knew this city, to hear of families’ living so near together all their lives, as but one chimney-back between them, and yet their doors opening into several streets, and the persons of those families never knowing one another, or who they were. And methought that passage of Martial was a strange one, when I first met with it,—“Nemo est tam prope tam proculque nobis:” and that observation of the Jews remarkable,—that sometime two verses in Scripture be joined as close together for place as close can be, and yet as distant for sense and matter as distant may be: and that relation of Seneca wondrous, if I miss not my author,—that a man, through sickness, did forget his own name: and that of the naturalists as wondrous,—that there is a beast, that as he is eating his meat, if he but once turn his head from it, he forgets it. But now a sad experience within mine ownself hath lessened these wonders, and doth make a thousand of such strangenesses as these, seem nothing; for I and my heart were born together, grew up together, have lived together, have lain together, have always been together,—and yet have had so little acquaintance together, as that we never talked together, nor conversed together; nay, I know not my heart, I have forgotten my heart. Ah! my bowels, my bowels,

that I could be grieved at the very heart, that my poor heart and I have been so unacquainted! And is not the same case yours too? I appeal to your own hearts, if they will but speak; and I beseech you to put them to it. How inquisitive ever were we after their estate, or how it goes with them, amongst all the inquisition that we make after other things! We are fallen into an Athenian age, as Acts xvii. 21; ‘spending our time in nothing more than in telling, or in hearing, news, or some new thing:’ how go things here, how there,—how in one place, how in another? But who is there that is inquisitive,—How are things with my poor heart? We are ever and anon lighting upon one or other of our acquaintance, and take a turn with them in the hall, or turn aside with them in the street, and inquire,—What news? How do things go? But who turns aside with his own heart into a private retiredness, or falls into discourse with that, and inquires,—Ah, poor heart, how go things with thee? We stick not to tell how much money we spend in new books, and how much time we spend in reading them; but it is a shame to tell how little time we spend, and how little pains we take, in reading over and perusing our own hearts.

As it is sometimes used in your house, Honourable and Honoured, to put a question, whether a question shall be put,—so I beseech you apply the text, “Commune with your own hearts,” whether you have communed with your own hearts: you spend much time, day after day, worthily and piously in conferring and communing among yourselves about the things of church and state; but what time do you spend, either day or night, in conferring and communing with your consciences about the affairs of your souls? You, ladies and gentlewomen, that bestow so much time in visiting and conferring with your glasses and your friends, what time do you bestow in visiting and conferring with your own hearts and souls?

You that spend so much time in conversing and conferring with others about the matters of your callings and employments, what time have you taken up, or do you employ, in conversing with yourselves about the matters of your nearest concernment?

I am the bolder to ask this question, because my text leads me to speak to your hearts, and it is a question that you must once answer.

Weigh but in the balance of a serious consideration, what time you have spent otherwise, and what time you have spent in this,—and for many scores or hundreds of hours or days that you owe to your hearts in this duty, can you write ‘fifty?’ Or go to the heap of your whole life, and where there should have been twenty measures employed about this business, can you find ten? Or where there should have been fifty vessels full of this duty, can you find twenty?

It was a senseless and a sensual will that the epicure made, that bequeathed to his player, to his cook, to his jester, and to such as fed and forwarded his carnal delights, talents and pounds; but ‘philosopho obolum,’ a half-penny only to him, that would have taught him wisdom. Is not the distribution of our time and converse much after the same proportion? Days and years bestowed upon the affairs of the world and worldliness, months and weeks spent and laid out in converse with friends and strangers, but scarce a minute in converse with a man’s own heart.

There are four things especially, that cause this strange and senseless strangeness and unacquaintance betwixt a man and himself,—and they are these:

1. Idleness; when men will not take the pains to put their heart to it to discourse with them. Heart-communication is not an easy work; and few there be, that, for idleness, will undertake it.

2. Carelessness of their own souls: and so they are not careful to discuss with them the things that concern them.

3. Worldliness; which takes up all the time and thoughts, that should be laid out upon the heart: as Hos. iv. 11; and as it was with him, 1 Kings xx. 40.

And, 4. Readiness to be deceived; ‘Decipi vult populus,’ men love leasing, as ver. 2 of this Psalm: and as, by our fall, ‘Et bonum perdidimus et voluntatem,’ we not only lost good, but also the will to it,—so, in our first deception by Satan, we had not only a deceit put upon us, but a deceiveableness, nay, a readiness to be deceived, put into us.

And thus, as ‘Tempora quædam surripiuntur, quædam eripiuntur, quædam excidunt:’ so it is with the care of, and converse with, our own hearts. What the palmer-worm of idleness leaves, the locust of carelessness eateth: and what the locust leaveth, the canker-worm of worldliness devours: and what that canker-worm leaveth, the caterpillar of readi-

ness to be deceived hath consumed : and thus hath all converse and communication with our own hearts been eaten up.

It is recorded of Job's friends, that when they came to him, and knew him not, he was so changed, that they wept and rent their garments^a. I would this might be the conclusion of this first use or application, or the fruit of all that I have spoken hitherto: look upon your own hearts,—do you know them? when had you and they any talk together? how much of your time have you spent in communication with them? have you not been strangers? have you not been unacquainted? have you not forgotten them? Be humbled, bemoan, be affected that you have been such strangers, and lay your hands upon your hearts; and resolve to be so no more.

And that is the second way that I would apply myself and the text to you, and that is, by way of exhortation, to incite you,—and by supplication, to entreat you, to apply yourselves seriously unto this duty held out in the text. It is strange, that we should need to be exhorted or entreated to such a thing as this, to be acquainted with our own hearts, as that is strange in 2 Cor. v. 20,—that men should need beseeching to be reconciled to God: but it is so true, that we need beseeching and entreating, that by what shall I beseech and entreat it so, as that I may prevail in my entreaty? I beseech you by the Lord, by the bowels of mercy to your own selves, by your hearts, by your souls, by any thing, by all things most dear unto you, be no more strangers to your own hearts; 'vindica te tibi,' acquaint yourselves with yourselves; and as Abraham to Lot, "Let us not fall out, for we are brethren:" so, be not foreigners to your own hearts, for they are your own. By what may I move you, or what words or arguments may I take up to persuade you?

Think but of these two or three particulars; for I shall spare to mention more:—

1. How sad a thing it is for a man to carry a conscience within him, that is altogether dumb and can say nothing, or that, when it speaks, tells him lies and nothing else: you grieve for this in your children,—be affected with this in your own souls.

2. Your hearts, by disusage of conferring with them, may even be utterly lost to you, as if you had no heart at all. I

^a Job, ii. 12.

have read of some that have come to such a pass,—as, namely, those in Hos. vii. 11; “Ephraim is like a silly dove, without a heart.”

3. Time will come when your hearts will speak, and shall speak the truth to you, though you will not put them to it to do so now: as Hab. ii. 3; “At an appointed time it shall speak, and it shall not lie:” it may be, in this life, by terrors,—certainly after death, by a gnawing worm, the dumbest, stupidest, and most senseless conscience that is now upon earth, shall be put to it to speak and to speak out to him, that had the least care or thought to put it to speak as the text enjoins. Thou wilt not strain thine heart to speak to thee, and to tell thee the truth now: but God will wrack it, and shall make it speak and not be silent; and how will thine heart endure then, when the Lord shall come to deal thus with thee? as Ezek. xxii. 14; “Men will not make their hearts to hear, nor to give them a faithful answer:” but, as Isa. xxvi. 11, “They will not see, but they shall see:” they will not hear, but they shall hear: they will not answer according to truth, but a time will come when they shall answer. Put them to it betimes by a conscientious communication, lest God put them to it by a wracking horror.

I shall not go about to give rules, how a man and his heart should come to talk, and how they should talk together; I would I could learn the lesson myself; only give me leave to mention one or two things to you, which cannot choose but be very conducive to such a purpose.

As, 1. Use retiredness: this thing, this verse teacheth, when it directs to commune with our own hearts upon our beds. And this Isaac practised, when, for his meditation, he went into the solitariness of the fields, Gen. xxiv. 63. As when Moses was alone in the wilderness, and there studying on God, God comes to him, and talks with him [Exod. iii], so when we get alone purposely to study our hearts, it is a great deal more probable that our hearts will come to us, that we may entertain discourse with them, than in the crowd of company and employments. Set some time apart out of your public or particular occasions, to deal with your hearts, and to talk with them,—as David, after the public business is done, turns home to visit and to bless his own house [2 Sam. vi. 20].

2. Put on resoluteness to put your hearts to it, and to

hear even the worst that they can speak to you : as Eli to hear the word of the Lord from Samuel, be it what it would, be it never so bitter. Men are naturally and generally unwilling that their heart should tell them all it knows, and what it ought. And as it was a very strange and a very sad prayer, that is made by the prophet Hosea for the women of Ephraim, Hos. ix. 14: "Give them, O Lord, what wilt thou give? Give them a miscarrying womb, and dry breasts:" a miserable thing to women as may be, yet such a petition for them as there could not be a fitter in their present posture; for the children born were but born to the slaughter:—so it is a very sad and doleful condition to a man as possibly can be, to have his conscience dull and dumb, or to be telling him nothing but what is false: and yet, there are thousands that account this the best posture and condition, that their conscience can be in, and they cannot find in their hearts, and they will not take the pains, to have it in any other temper, nor would they have it speak any other ways to them. Ah! but let a righteous and a wakeful conscience smite me, and not suffer me to sin, but tell me of it: this balm, in the end, will not break my head, and I shall rejoice at last in such strokes.

3. Take opportunity, by any wakening of conscience, that puts it to speak, to keep it waking and speaking; if any piercing sermon, or fright, or cross, or some such thing, do rouse your heart at any time, and set it a talking and telling you the truth, do, like Ben-hadad's servants by Ahab, catch at the opportunity, ply it and keep it speaking, and let it not grow dumb again: if you let it alone never so little, like the disciples in Matt. xxvi. 40. 43, it will be asleep and speechless in a trice again. I have known him, that hath had sometime very fair and familiar society and communication with his own heart, and they have discoursed seriously and truly one to another, have asked questions, and given answers without deceiving; when something or other hath come between, and interrupted a while this friendly converse, and my beloved was gone, my heart got out of the way, and neither it, nor a word from it, to be found again.

4. When your hearts and you are talking together, do it as if you were talking together at God's dreadful tribunal: as if you were, and as you must once be, debating the case there. Charge it as Paul doth Timothy, 2 Tim. iv. 1; as 'before God

and the Lord Jesus Christ,' that it speak the truth, and that there be no dissembling betwixt you. Before them must you once debate the matter to the very bottom,—do it as before them continually.

And now, for conclusion of all, and for our third application, I shall crave leave to leave some few proposals and interrogatories with you for your own heart, that, as Elijah, before his departure out of the world, left a letter behind him, for Jehoram the king of Judah, to ruminate upon when Elijah was gone^o,—so, before we part, I beseech you take from me something along with you, to commune and confer with your hearts about, when you and I see not each other, and when you are alone.

I shall do herein by you, as an Israelite did by the priest, when he would have him to inquire something for him of the Lord, by Urim and Thummim : I shall put my questions into your hands, and shall leave you to go to the oracle of your own hearts, and to take their answer.

Some general things I would propose to all of you in general, and some particulars to some particulars. I might to all in general, desire you to question with your own hearts, you that have been preserved in these sad times, and you that have been spectators of the sad judgments that have been upon us, what betterings you have had by all these judgments, and what thankfulness you have showed for your preservation.

But the first question that I would desire every one, that heareth me this day, to propose to his own heart, is but this ; ' Heart, how dost thou ? ' A few words, but a very serious question. You know this is the first question, and the first salute that we use one to another,—' Sir, how do you ? ' I would you would as constantly practise it with your own hearts,—' Heart, how dost thou do ? How is it with thee for thy spiritual estate ? ' Get but a true answer from your heart upon this query, and then you will see that I have some cause and reason, why I propose this question : I know what the answer of most hearts will be, before the query is proposed,—namely, that it will be either like Elisha's about Ben-hadad, no danger of death, though he died presently ; or like the Pharisee's in the gospel, ' Lord, I thank him, I am not as other men's hearts are.' Tell that heart, ' I believe it not ; ' tell it, ' you believe it not : ' examine it farther, press it like Ahab to

^o 2 Chron. xxi. 12.

Micaiah again; leave it not, like Delilah, till you have its utmost: get a right, and direct, and real, answer to this question, and then answer me, whether it were not worth the asking. This is but the very same query in substance, that the apostle proposeth, 2 Cor. xiii. 5; "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith."

Secondly, Propose this question to every one of your hearts; 'Heart, what wilt thou do?' Or, 'Heart, what dost think will become of thee and me?' As that dying Roman once said, 'Animula, vagula, blandula,' &c. Ah! poor, wretched, miserable soul, whither art thou and I a going, and what will become of thee, when thou and I shall part! This very thing doth Moses propose to Israel, though in other terms, Deut. xxxii. 29; "O that they would consider their latter end!" And, O that you would propose it constantly to your hearts, to consider and debate upon! Would you but dispute these two questions, every one with his own heart, and put his conscience to it, to give its clear opinion in these matters, or to speak the very truth what it thinks concerning your present and future estate,—I should think I had gained exceeding much by this discourse that I have made, and that I have spent this hour exceeding happily.

And now, Honourable and Most Honoured, give me leave to level the last things I have to speak, at your hearts only, and to leave my closing up of all that I would say, closed up in your bosoms. I would fain commend something to the serious conference of yourselves and your own hearts, when they and you are together alone; and they are but these three things;—what hath been done for you; what hath been done before you; and what you have to do.

I would first have desired you to debate seriously with your own hearts, what the Lord hath done for you. But here my labour is happily prevented, and the work is better done to my hands, than my hands can do it. I shall only add this,—that if you should write such a book as the prophet Isaiah did, Isa. viii. 1, 2, a great roll of a book, and yet nothing written in it but this word, 'Maher-shalal-hash-baz,' over and over again, from beginning to end; so a great book, and nothing in it but this written, what God hath done for the parliament of England, it would fill a great volume, to write what he hath done: and when you have written what you can, you can never write enough.

But, secondly, I shall desire you seriously to commune with your own hearts, of what London hath done for you. London, the mirror and wonder of love, zeal, constancy, and bounty, to you and your cause: London, the ark that hath kept you safe, in this deluge of blood that hath overflowed the nation: London, your Ophir and Indies, that hath supplied you with masses of money and plate in all your wants: London, your bank and stock of men and hearts: London, your so much, that you had not been what you are, if it had not been for London: London, that, under a parliament, hath preserved a nation; and London, that, under God, hath preserved a parliament. Was it ever seen, or could it ever be related, that any city under heaven, ever did, as London hath done, in love and kindness to your cause and you? What one among you can look into his own heart, but he must needs find London written there?

And now your friend Lazarus is sick; your faithful, constant, and loving London, complains she is not well: she finds and feels some sore diseases breeding in her bowels, that are like to undo her: she comes to you, to crave your help, and pours her complaints into your bosom. Might I not say, as the Jews once to Christ, "You deserve to do for her?" But I shall only say, 'commune with your own hearts' what London hath done for you, and I need say no more.

If any one shall think, that I am now besides the mark, and speak of a matter that I have nothing to do withal, I shall produce my warrant to speak what I do, and refer to a proof and testimony of what I speak.

My first warrant is your gratitude, that is so ready to be thankful to those, that have showed you kindness, that you will not take it unthankfully from those, that do mind you who have showed it.

My second is, the obligation that you and I, and all the nation, stand in to London, who hath been to us all such a stay, and wall, and sanctuary in our troubles, as she hath been,—that, for London's sake, who can hold his peace?

But, thirdly, for my Scripture-warrant for this, I shall desire you to turn to 2 Sam. ii. 4, where the servants of David do account it a duty, as it seems, for they practise it accordingly,—to tell David of the kindness that Jabesh-gilead had showed to Saul, though he knew it before.

And as for the proof of what I have spoken, I shall desire, whosoever thinks I am besides my mark, but to turn to his own heart, and there lay down a leaf, till his heart and he do meet alone, and then to read and study impartially, what London hath done for the parliament of England, and then let him judge of what I say.

I know your gratitude will be ready to say still with David, in 2 Sam. ix, "Is there yet any of the kindred of Jonathan, that hath showed us kindness, that we may show them the kindness of the Lord again?"

Why, yes, I beseech you, in the third place, 'commune with your own hearts' what the ministry of England hath done for you. My warrant for the moving of this unto you, besides your gratitude, I may show from divers of your own orders and expressions. For, in how many of your addresses and desires to the city or country for the raising of moneys, men, or horses, have you still laid much upon the hands and fidelity of the ministers, to promote the work, and to stir up their several congregations to it? And I beseech you now 'commune with your own hearts,' how they have discharged that trust, and performed your injunctions: and in your thoughts take up an account, how they have behaved themselves in that matter, and whether they have not been exceeding faithful.

Have not these trumpets and these poor pitchers had their share, and a good share too, in bringing down the walls of Jericho, and the camp of Midian? Have not they, like that story in Ezekiel xxxvii. 10, if I may so express it, prophesied you up an army? The witness of these things is in the whole kingdom, and a witness of them is in your own bosoms: and there I leave the consideration of them to be laid to heart.

But now, where is this ministry of England, that have been so faithful, so useful, to the cause in hand, and so forward to forward it upon all occasions? How are these real sons of Zion brought low, despised, oppressed, and trod under foot, in many places of the land? Their ministry, by many, scanded for antichristian, their persons vilified, sometimes violenced and endangered, their subsistence impaired, their quiet interrupted, their families impoverished; the function of the ministry how nearly undone! Now I beseech you, commune with your own hearts, what the ministry

of England hath done for you, and what others have done to it; and then consider, what you have to do.

A second thing that I would humbly recommend to the serious and sad debate and communication of your hearts, is, what hath been done before you.

And here I cannot but take up a little of the style and manner of expression that is used by Paul, when he was to plead his case before Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 2;—I think myself happy, most noble senate, that since my lot is fallen to speak unto you from this place, that my lot hath fallen upon such a day, as that it is now but fourteen days to the time, that you have appointed to humble yourselves before God for some of the mainest things, that I am to speak about. I know that they that are resolved to debate of these matters to the full, betwixt themselves and their own hearts, and betwixt themselves and God, on that day,—will patiently give me leave, at this time, as by way of a preparation-sermon, to speak the more freely concerning those things, that you are resolved that day to be humbled for.

I say again, therefore, I beseech you, seriously commune with your own hearts, what hath been done before you.

I shall tell you one of the saddest stories that I am persuaded is to be found in any record, or in any experience upon the earth,—and that is, about the violation of our covenant.

It is not yet four years since we entered into as solemn a covenant as ever did nation; and will it be believed, in the next generation [if our guilt upon it do not make it too evident], or would it be believed in any remote parts of the world [but that the fame of it is blown through all nations], that, in so short a time, after so solemn an obligation, and the parliament that brought on the covenant sitting, the covenant should be so forgot, as we dolefully see daily that it is?

I would I might say only that it is forgot: for if it were forgot only, there might be some more excuse; but it is set up as a sign to be spoken against, nay, a sword is gone through the very soul of it, in such a kind of violation as I think no story can parallel. I shall instance only in two things:—

1. We vowed against error, heresy, and schism, and swore to the God of truth and peace, to the utmost of our power to extirpate them, and to root them out. These

stones, and walls, and pillars, were witnesses of our solemn engagement. And now, if the Lord should come to inquire what we have done according to this vow and covenant, I am amazed to think what the Lord would find amongst us ; would he not find ten schisms now for one then ; twenty heresies now for one at that time ; and forty errors now for one, when we swore against them ? Was there ever more palpable walking contrary to God, or more desperate crossing of a covenant ? If we had sworn, to the utmost of our power, to have promoted and advanced error, heresy, and schism, could these then have grown and come forward more, than now they have done, though we swore against them ?

2. And so, in the second place, we entered into as solemn an engagement for reformation in matters of religion ; and this was the joyful sound that stirred up the hearts of the people, and this was their hopes : five or six years ago it was proclaimed, and betwixt three and four years ago it was covenanted ; and our hearts danced within us for the hopes we had in this particular. But what hath been done ? ‘ I looked, saith God, for grapes, and behold sour grapes,’ and nothing else. When reformation was first spoken of, we had order and ordinances ; but now, how is the one lost and the other slighted ! We had then sacraments, full congregations, a followed ministry, and frequented churches ; but now, sacraments laid aside, congregations scattered, the ministry cried down, churches empty, church-doors shut up, ‘ equestres Samnitum in ipso Samnio.’ If you look for a reformation upon our covenanting for reformation, how little to be found, and how much clear contrary ! Go to the isles of Chittim, and from thence pass over to Keder, in the east,—search all the stories that are to be found, and inquire in all nations under the whole heavens,—whether the like things have been done in any times, in any nation ; and yet have these things been done before your eyes.

Give me leave to relate unto you a story out of the Turkish history, and to apply it :—

Uladislaus, the king of Hungary, having made a league with Amurath, the great Turk, and solemnly covenanted and sealed to articles thereof in the name of Christ, was afterward persuaded to break it, and to go to war against Amurath. Being in the heat of the fatal battle at Varna, the Turk draws the articles of the league out of his bosom,

and spreads them towards the crucifix which he saw in the Christian's banner, with these words ; ' Now, Christ, if thou be a God, as they say thou art, revenge the wrong done unto thy name by these thy Christians, who made this league in thy name, and now have thus broken it.'

And, accordingly, was this wretched covenant-breach avenged with the death of Uladislaus, and almost all his army.

Should Christ spread our covenant before us, upon the same accusing terms as he spread his before Christ, what could we answer ? Or, if Satan should spread our covenant before God against us, as Hezekiah did the Assyrian's letter, what could we say for ourselves in so horrid and so plain a case ? If the Lord should implead us, and speak such bitter things as these against us, ' You have suffered the solemnest covenant to be thus broken, that ever was sworn unto by men : the horriddest heresies and errors have grown amongst you, that ever did among a nation : as glorious a church as was under heaven, is thus near ruined before your eyes : and the gloriousest gospel that shone upon earth, is almost destroyed,—and you look on !' How could we answer, or hold up our faces before the Lord ? but how must iniquity lay her hand upon her mouth, and not be able to speak a word !

I go not about to charge the guilt of these things upon your consciences,—far be that from you, far is that from me ; I only desire to press the thoughts of these things upon your hearts, that you may seriously be moved, and seriously affected, with the consideration of so high and of so dangerous import, and may sadly commune with your own hearts what you have to do.

3. This is the third thing that I would humbly leave with you, and recommend unto you to ruminate upon, and to debate with your own hearts. Not that I think to offer you any thing as your direction ; I am the least able for that of any that speak unto you,—but that I would mind you a little of those things, that you have to do withal.

You have, in your transacting, three things of the nicest and tenderest handling and meddling with, that can come to hands of mortal men : and those are, the work of God, the life of souls, and complaints of poor and oppressed ones. Who is sufficient for any of these things ? and yet all these things do now lie upon your hands.

1. You are to do, and are in doing, the work of God; that is, to build his house, to maintain his truth, and to execute his justice,—for so let me style it: things of the highest honour and concernment, that can be intrusted in the hands of men: you had need to be truly sensible, and clearly and conscientiously to apprehend, how great this work is that you are about, and to discourse and debate with your hearts again and again, how great a task there lies upon you.

2. How many thousands, nay, millions, of souls, and their eternal estate, now lie upon your hands,—of the souls of the present and the future generations! “Onus, ipsis angelis formidandum!” Oh! how it does concern you most intimately to consider of it, and lay it to heart!

I shall humbly recommend to your hearts, to debate and to determine upon one question, that I may name no more, which I cannot, I dare not, go about to determine;—and that is this: there are now many and many congregations, in this our land, that, either for want of means, or through unquietness of sectaries or malignants, want pastors, and have done long; and this want still increaseth in the kingdom daily: and so, in divers places of the kingdom, people run riot, and do what seems good in their own eyes, for want of ministers, and of execution of justice, among them. Now, at whose hands will the blood of these souls, who, in this case, cannot but be in miserable danger, be required? When ministers were in those places, when justices were in their places, we know, then, to whom the charge of those souls belonged; but now I beseech you, seriously to commune with your own hearts, where the blood and life of those souls lie chargeable now.

3. You have to do with the complaints of poor and oppressed ones; things of as dangerous an edge, if put up to heaven against any person, as any other whatsoever.

There is a great cry in Egypt, complaining in every angle of the kingdom, some for want of pay, some for want of justice; too many through the pressure of publicans through the kingdom, the unjust exactors of your just taxations, that lay on burdens of their own, and, either for their own advantage or revenge, multiply pressures, and create complaints in every quarter.

Honourable and Honoured, these three things are those things, that you have to deal withal; and, upon the import

of those three things, give me leave to represent these two particulars to you:—

1. That these things will admit of no delaying, nor doing the work that concerns them any negligence. For, 1. The church, by delays, may be ruined, truth may be quite lost, souls may be undone and perish, sins are growing high, and complaints loud. Now, Lord, come before Lazarus die. 2. A little, and a little delay still, may chance at last to cause a decree to pass in the court of heaven, that there shall be no healing at all: so did delay in the matter of reformation, in the second of Judges. There Christ, at Bochim, tells the people, that whereas he had undertaken to conquer Canaan for them, and had done hitherto, and had waited hitherto, that they would expel the Canaanites, and settle reformation, and they had not done it, he would now henceforward conquer no more for them.

2. These things will not admit the work that concerneth them, to be done by halves. The work of the Lord must be perfect, and Christ's floor thoroughly purged. God abhors monsters in sacrifices in the Levitical law,—and so doth he in matters of reformation; all excess or defect, beyond or short of his will, suits not with his work. A word is enough to the wise. I leave all to the serious communication of you with your own hearts; and you, and your hearts, and all that hath been said, to the blessing of our good God. And I shall only crave leave to relate and apply one story more, and so have I done:—

It is reported of a poor Macedonian, that, having his cause pleading at the bar before king Philip,—the king, in the mean while, sitting in a sleepy posture upon the bench, and, at last, passing a sleepy sentence against the man, and casting him in his cause,—the poor man cries out, “I appeal, I appeal.” This wakes the king, and makes him to start up. “Appeal!” says he, “to whom canst thou appeal beyond me? Am not I the king?” The poor man answered, “I appeal from king Philip asleep, to king Philip awake.”

If there be any heart here that is moved or raised any whit against me, for any thing that I have thus freely spoken, I first appeal to the Knower of all hearts, before whom I stand, who knoweth with what heart I have spoken it.

But, again, I appeal from that heart asleep, as it lies

muffled in pride, or peevishness, or selfishness, or self-interests, or any other distemper or passion,—to that heart, when it shall be awaked, either by grace, or by justice, or by the summons of death, or by the sound of the last trump, when that heart and mine must both appear before the tribunal of Him that knows all hearts.

Now, to that great Judge, the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever, Amen.

AT THE PUBLIC SALE, MARCH 21, 1841.



To the Honourable the House of Commons, assembled in Parliament:—

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

The great council of Jerusalem, and that the temple, and the greatest managements of the council were the matters of religion. Such hath been the posture of your deans, and such the posture of your cathedral, in all your sitting, and in all your standing, in any degree of men not to serve you, who are so much to preserve the state,—as, especially, in the temple of the temple, since you labour so much also to serve the temple. Obedience to your commands is the lowest expression of such a service, because it is so an- tually due; yet is it the highest that any man can reach unto, readiness being joined to that obedience. These are the two notes that I can tender unto your court, and the two truths that I have to offer at your altar, not having a better or more valuable gift and offering to bring, your nobleness will please to accept of the gift, because of the heart of the giver given with it; and, like him whom we present, to account. To obey, to be better than ourselves, and to be better, better than the best of men. What is obedience to your commands, was humbly presented to your ears and hearing not long ago, is now, again, the same, and in the same obedience and humility, presented to your eyes and hearing. It is still the same, and in the same way, it secures the against all thoughts of interest, of displeasure or expropriation, a most humble and obedient

ELIAS REDIVIVUS^a:

A Sermon,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

HONOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

IN THE CHURCH OF

ST. MARGARET, WESTMINSTER,

AT THE PUBLIC FAST, MARCH 29, 1643.

*To the Honourable the House of Commons, assembled in
Parliament:—*

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

THE great council of Jerusalem^b sat near the temple, and the greatest managings of the council were the matters of religion. Such hath been the posture of your desires, and such the bent of your endeavours, in all your sitting: and, as it is ingratitude in any degrees of men not to serve you, who strive so much to preserve the state,—so, especially, is it in the ministers of the temple, since you labour so much also to serve the temple. Obedience to your commands is the lowest expression of such a service, because it is so naturally due; yet is it the highest that my meanness can reach unto, readiness being joined to that obedience. These are the two mites that I can tender unto your *corban*, and the two turtles that I have to offer at your altar; not having a better or more valuable gift and offering to bring, your nobleness will please to accept of the gift, because of the heart of the giver given with it; and, like him whom ye represent, to account, “To obey, to be better than sacrifice,—and to hearken, better than the fat of rams.” What, in obedience to your command, was humbly presented to your ears and hearing not long ago, is now, upon the like command, in the same obedience and humility, presented to your eyes and reading. If it shall find acceptance with you, it secureth me against all thought or care of inferiors’ displeasure or exceptions. I most humbly and submissively

^a This sermon is not in the English folio-edition.

^b R. Sol. in Ex. xxi. Luke, ii. 46. Talm. in Sanhed. cap. Din. Mammonoth.

cast it, myself, and all that I am or can, at the feet and disposal of your Honourable House; and, because short discourse best fitteth your great occasions, cease to trouble you with more words; but shall never cease to solicit the throne of grace for continued defence and blessing upon your persons and endeavours; that the lawgiver may never fail, till Shiloh come, as we desire, amongst us; and so ever prayeth,

Your most unworthy, but truly

devoted servant,

JOHN LIGHTFOOT.

LUKE, I. 17.

And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.

IF ever 'the hearts of the fathers' had need to be 'turned to the children,' that need is now; and if ever the 'disobedient' had need to be reduced 'to the wisdom of the just,' that need is now also: but, where is the 'spirit,' and where the 'power?' Where an Elias, or where a Baptist, to do the work? For if ever those searching and trying times, which were spoken of so long ago by our Saviour, in the twelfth of Luke, and the three-and-fiftieth, have overtaken any nation, they have overtaken this of ours: "Five in one house, and they divided, three against two, and two against three. The father divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's enemies are they of his own household^b." And if ever those irregular and exorbitant behaviours, which were spoken of so long ago by the prophet Isaiah, in the fifth verse of the third chapter, have overrun and foraged any people, they have done so by this of ours: "The people oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child behaving himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable." These are our

^b Matt. x. 36.

sorrows, but where our remedy? This our misery, but where our redress? For the ‘divisions of Reuben, there are great thoughts of heart;’ but who can help them? For the divisions in the church, for divisions in the state, divisions in families, divisions in opinions, divisions in affections (the Lord keep them out of your two houses), divisions in every division; but who can heal them? As the host at Nola, in the story^c, who, when he was commanded by the Roman censor to go and call the good men of the city to appear before him, went to the churchyard, and there called at the graves of the dead, “O ye good men of Nola, come away, for the Roman censor calls for your appearance;” for he knew not where to find a good man alive:—so, in these distractions and distresses of this our land, if we would find out a joiner of hearts, and a moulder of humours, that could piece again the disunited affections, and form again the unfashioned demeanours of men towards men, we might go and look for the mansion of Elias, or go and knock at the grave of John the Baptist, and call them to come to such a cure as this, for they once have wrought so great a cure; but who can do it, that is now alive? Oh, how happy were the case with us, if ‘the spirit and power of Elias’ were as ready to be found in your two houses, as they were once to be found in John the Baptist, and as they are to be seen in the words of the text!

But, as the ark and the ephod at the sacking of Nob, they which should always have remained together, were, by that doleful accident, parted asunder, and kept at a distance,—even so these two, which God once joined together in Elias and in the Baptist, and which the Holy Ghost hath joined together in the words of the text, some evil counsel hath put asunder, so that ‘the spirit’ is with you, but ‘the power’ removed a great way off. What our Saviour saith concerning offences; “It cannot be but offences will come, but woe to him by whom the offence cometh!” so may we dolefully concerning this;—It is our misery that this divorce is come among us; but woe to that counsel by whom the divorce first came! it had been good for that counsellor, had he never been born.

How happy are those days, which are spoken of by the Psalmist, when “mercy and truth are met together, and

^c Antonio di Guevarra in *Relox de los princip.* lib. 1. cap. 2.

righteousness and peace do kiss each other!" And how happily should we hope to see those days and those things in this land to meet, if we could but see these two to meet again, that are now so unhappily removed to distance! Well, all that we can do, is to seek to drive them together with our prayers: and as Moses for the Urim and Thummim upon Levi, so we for these united upon you to pray in public, and to pray in private, to pray on the Lord's day, and to pray on other days; and it is to be a main petition on this solemn day of humiliation, that as the Lord hath put the 'spirit of Elias' into your hearts, so that he would put the 'power of Elias' into your hands,—that as he hath made you willing, so would he also make you able, "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous."

The words of the text are the last words of the Old Testament,—there uttered by a prophet, here expounded by an angel: there concluding the law, and here beginning the gospel. "Behold (saith Malachi^d), I will send you Elijah the prophet:" and he saith, the angel "shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias." And "he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," saith the one; and "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," saith the other. Thus sweetly and nearly should the two Testaments join together, and thus divinely would they kiss each other, but that the wretched Apocrypha doth thrust in between: like the two cherubins^e in the temple-oracle; as with their outer wings, they touch the two sides of the house, from "in the beginning," to "come, Lord Jesus,"—so, with their inner, they would touch each other, the end of the law with the beginning of the gospel, did not this patchery of human invention divorce them asunder.

It is a thing not a little to be admired, how this Apocrypha could ever get such place in the hearts and in the Bibles of the primitive times, as to come to sit in the very centre of them both: but to this wonderment there may be some satisfaction given,—namely, because that these books came to them from among the Jews, as well as the Old Testament and the New: and because that the Jews alone, and alone so long, had had the knowledge of divinity and religion among them,—the converted Gentiles could not but

^d Chap. iv. 5.^e 1 Kings, vi. 27.

give their writings extraordinary esteem: and because the Talmud not being yet written, the world was not acquainted with the vanity and strain of Jewish learning, those unsuspecting times did swallow these books, as not tasting as yet how unsavoury that was, nor distinguishing these to be of the same taste. It is, therefore, more to be admired, that when the Talmud was written, and the impious and ridiculous doctrines and fables of the Jewish schools laid open to the world, that then these books, which show themselves to be of the very same stamp in many things, should not only not be refused out the Bibles, and out men's good conceit, but also get better and farther footing in the same: but to this wonderment some satisfaction also may be given; namely, that superstition began then to grow in the church every day more and more, and it became a religion to do as their forefathers had done before, and to retain what they had retained, be it whatsoever it would, and of what ungroundlessness soever.

But it is a wonder, to which I could never yet receive satisfaction, that in churches that are reformed, they have shaken off the yoke of superstition, and unpinned themselves from off the sleeve of former customs, or doing as their ancestors have done,—yet in such a thing as this, and of so great import, should do as first ignorance, and then superstition, hath done before them. It is true, indeed, that they have refused these books out of the canon, but they have reserved them still in the Bible: as if God should have cast Adam out of the state of happiness, and yet have continued him in the place of happiness. Not to insist upon this, which is some digression, you know the counsel of Sarah concerning Ishmael, and in that she outstripped Abraham in the spirit of prophecy; “Cast out the bond-woman and her son; for the son of the bond-woman may not be heir with the son of the free^f.”

In the words of the text you may see your own work and task; and those two things that you have so long laboured under, and that we have so long longed after,—reconciliation and reformation. You may behold, in a part of the text, reconciliation, in these words, “To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children:” and reformation in the other, “and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.” These are the

^f Vid. R. Sol. et R. Menah. in loc.

two hands of our Master, which is in heaven, or rather the two good things in his hands, after which we his servants have looked so long, and do look this day, and cannot be taken off, till he give them to us. These are the hands of your two houses, or rather the two great gifts which we wait, till God put into your hands to convey them towards us. These are the two pillars, Jachin and Boaz^s, firmness and strength, that we long to see set up at the door of that temple that you are in building: and these are the two twins, for which the Tamar of our England is in travail, and is pained to be delivered, if there be but strength to bring them forth.

These two things, contained in the latter part of the text, are set forth and illustrated by two circumstances in the former: first, by the party and the function of that party, that must perform so great a work; those included in these words, "he shall go before him:" secondly, the qualifications and endowments of that party for the function, and for the work; that expressed in these, "in the spirit and power of Elias." The party rare, the functions honourable, his endowments singular, his work divine; "He shall go before him," &c.

We will take up the words according to this division, but not according to this order: for as, in nature, the agent is before the action, and as, in the text, the workman is named before the work,—so are they fit to be considered, and so will we take them into our handling, and so shall we take them as they lie in the text. And, first, of the first, "He shall go before him."

Who are meant by the 'he' and the 'him' in this part of the text, the dimmest eye that is, will easily judge and discern, upon its own reading; namely, John the Baptist, and our Saviour Christ, two that were in a very near relation one to another by nature, for they were kinsmen according to the flesh,—but of a nearer and of a higher relation in regard of their function, for they were they that began the gospel, or the one began, and the other perfected; and they were they that were the two great prophets of the New Testament, or the one greater than a prophet, and the other greater than a man. I cannot omit that which is not, nor cannot be, omitted by any expositor, it is so plain upon the 'him' in this

part; namely, that in the verse next before, he is called the God of Israel,—“He shall turn many of the children to the Lord their God;” and in this verse, and in this whole passage, he is showed to be Christ, of whom it is spoken; which giveth a pregnant and undeniable proof that Christ is God, against the wicked Arius, that held him for a creature.

The Baptist went before our Saviour in divers particulars; in his conception, in his birth, in his preaching, in his death. For the miraculous conception and birth of John went before the more miraculous conception and birth of Christ; his powerful preaching before the other's more powerful; and his renowned death before the other's more renowned. But the words do not mean so much his going before him in time, as his going before him in ministry,—nor his appearing before him in the world, as his appearing before him to do him service, as a servant doth before his master to provide for his entertainment; and so the words following do explain it, “He shall go before him, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord:” and so the seventy disciples are said to be sent before our Saviour “two and two before his face^b,” that is, to prepare men for his receiving, against that he himself should come.

All the prophets went before our Saviour in their ministry, in their divers generations; but John in a more special manner above them all. They, like Balaam, in the four-and-twentieth of Numbers, did behold him, but not now,—did foretell him, but not near; but he beheld him face to face, and he told of him standing by: and hence it is, that our Saviour calls him ‘more than a prophetⁱ,’ nay, as much or more than any mere man, that was naturally born of a woman: ‘more than a prophet,’ because he went before Christ as his forerunner; and as great as any that was ever born, because he was the beginner of the gospel. The ministry of John the Baptist, and the publishing of the gospel, like time and the motion of the heavens, began together, and in one and the same instant. So hath Mark^j conjoined them, in the very beginning of the gospel; “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thee.” So, likewise, in the first of the Acts and the two-and-twentieth, Peter proposing a disciple to be chosen instead of Judas, “Of

^b Luke, x. 1.ⁱ Matt. xi. 9.^j Chap. i. 1.

these men (saith he) which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John :” and so in the tenth chapter of the same book of the Acts and the thirty-seventh, “ The word you know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism, which John preached.” And one place for all^c, “ All the prophets and the law prophesied until John,” and from him began the gospel. So that what some of the fathers say concerning Malachi, That he was ‘ *Limes Judaismi et Christianismi*,’ we may not unfitly say concerning him ;—that he was ‘ the bounds of Judaism and Christianity,’ the limits from whence the law and the prophets took their conclusion, and the gospel and the kingdom of heaven their beginning.

Now, as the ministry of John consisted of two distinct and considerable parts, preaching and baptizing (like as the gift of prophecy had consisted, in times before, of a double spirit,—or, to speak more properly, of a double power of one and the same spirit, “ to foretell things to come, and to work miracles”), so, by both these, did he begin the gospel, and, by both these, did he go before our Saviour. These were, as it were, the two hands with which he laid the foundation, and began to build up the fabric, of the evangelical temple : and these two hath Mark^d joined together in his relation, as John did in the exercise of his function ; “ John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance.”

By both these he began the gospel : and, first, by his baptism ; for,—

First, Baptism was used in the times before and under the law, but it was to admit proselytes to the religion of the Jews : but the Baptist now cometh with a baptism to admit the Jews to another religion besides their own. Jacob^e, when he is to enter and admit the remnant of Sichem, that escaped the sword, into his family and religion, he doth it by baptism. “ Put away (saith he) the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments ;” where, by the second injunction, “ Be clean,” Aben Ezra^f well observeth, is meant the washing of their bodies in water ; and, indeed, nothing else can so properly be meant ; which what was it else but a baptizing ? And so Rambam, or Maimo-

^c Matt. xi. 13.^d Chap. i. 4.^e Gen. xxxv. 2.^f Ab. Ezr. in Gen. xxxv.

nides^g, in his epitome of the Talmud, relateth from thence, that in the times of David and Solomon^h, when heathens came into the Jews' religion by thousands (for a hundred three-and-fifty thousand of them helped to build the temple), they were admitted therein by baptism, or by being washed,—and not by circumcision. Thus was baptism used in those ancient timesⁱ, and used to induct the Gentiles into the church and religion of the Jews. But now comes John with a baptism of another end,—namely, to enter the Jews into another church and religion than their own; and so, by his baptism, doth he begin the gospel.

Secondly, And so also did he by his preaching: for whereas the law called for absolute and exact performance, and cried 'a curse on him that confirmed not all the words of the law to do them^j;' John cometh in another tenor, like God in the still voice,—and, instead of challenging the strict performance of works, he preacheth the gentle doctrine of repentance; that whereas they could not do what the law required, they should repent for that they had broke the law. And thus is the rigorous and terrible tenor of the law changed into the sweet and comfortable doctrine of repentance: and thus, both by baptizing and preaching, doth John begin the gospel.

And so, by both also, did he go before our Saviour: by baptism to admit men into Christ against he should come,—and by his preaching to let Christ into men when he came: by his baptizing to make way for Christ's coming among men, and by his preaching to make way for men their coming unto Christ: and so much is intimated by the words, that next and immediately do follow the text, "To make ready a people prepared for the Lord." This might be taken only for an elegancy, such as the Scripture useth to quicken expressions, by repetitions; but it hath its proper vigour and significancy, and, in the two several words, devoteth the two distinct fruits of the ministry of the Baptist, in her two parts: his baptism, to make men ready to look for Christ, that was now in coming; and his preaching, to have them prepared for his receiving when he came.

The observation that we may take up from hence, is this,—That Christ, when he came to show himself in the world,

^g Tom. i. p. 317. Issure Biah, perek 13.

ⁱ Vid. R. Sol. Jarch. in Ex. xxiv.

^h 1 Kings, v. 15, 16.

^j Deut. xxvii. 26

had need of a powerful and a spirited forerunner. He was the expectation of the Gentiles^k; he was the expectation of the Samaritans^l; he was the expectation of the Jews^m; he was the expectation of all nationsⁿ. And yet, when he came that was so expected, he had need of a harbinger to go before him, and a strong forerunner to make his way; and all this too little too: for, “when he came amongst his own, his own received him not^o.”

The Jews fancy concerning the cloud of glory, that conducted Israel through the wilderness, that it did not only show them the way, but also plane it; that it did not only lead them in the way in which they must go, but also fit them the way to go upon; that it levelled all the mountains, and smoothed all the rocks; that it cleared all the bushes, and removed all the rubs. No less preparatives were required for our Saviour's coming, to make way for him in the entertainment of men, or to make way for men to the entertaining of him: and so hath the Scripture expressed it, in terms not much different: “Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth^p.”

There were two main things, that lay between the Jews and Christ, at his appearing, that were most likely to keep them asunder, and to hinder the access of each to other,—and so they did: and these were, their corruption in manners and in behaviour, and their corruption in doctrine and in religion; the former like rough ways, that must be smoothed,—and the latter like crooked, that must be straightened; and both being such as must be helped, or little hopes they can come to Christ.

First, As for their corruption in manners, had we not evidence enough thereof in the Scripture, that lays it open, we have sufficient in their own writers. They were “a generation of vipers;” so John calls them, Matt. iii. 7: they were “a wicked and adulterous generation;” so our Saviour calls them, Matt. xvi. 4, seeming to allude to the phrase of Hosea, the “children of fornications^q.” They were a people stiffnecked, and of uncircumcised hearts and ears: so Stephen calls them, Acts vii. 51. And, to spare more, our Sa-

^k Gen. xlix. 10.

^l John, iv. 25.

^m Luke, xix. 11.

ⁿ Hag. ii. 7.

^o John, i. 11.

^p Isa. xl. 4. Luke, iii. 5.

^q Hos. i. 2.

viour makes them as it were the common sewer of all vengeance, and consequently the sink of all iniquity, Matt. xxiii. 35: "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias."

To these characters of their manners, given by Scripture, we may add the confession of their own authors, in their writings. The Talmud, in Sanhedrim^r, in the eleventh chapter, hath these words: "R. Juda saith, In the generation in which the son of David shall come, the house of the assembly shall be a stews,—the wisdom of the scribes shall fail,—they that fear sin shall be despised,—and the face of that generation shall be like dogs." St. Paul hits them with their own title, "Beware of dogs, beware of the concision^s;" and so doth John seem also to do, "Without are dogs^t." Such another testimony doth David Kimchi^u give out of the Rab- bins, on Isa. lix. 16: "Rabbi Johanan saith (saith he), The son of David cometh not, but either in a generation all holy, as it is written, Thy people shall all be righteous, and inherit the land for ever: Or in a generation all wicked, as it is written, He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor." Too pregnant and woful experience showed, that the latter was only true; and their own behaviour at our Saviour's coming, confirmeth the gloss to prophesy truly, that their manners then should be most corrupt.

Secondly, And so was also their doctrine: and that withal in a twofold relation:—1. In regard of the opinion that they held concerning the legal rites, that were amongst them before: and, 2. In regard of the opinion that they held concerning Christ, who was now in coming.

1. They were so glued to the ceremonies of Moses, and so bewitched with the traditions of the fathers, that it was an impossibility, in human reason, to thaw them asunder.

Paul, speaking of his own doting upon these, speaketh the affection of his whole nation in this particular: "I was exceedingly zealous of the traditions of the fathers^v." Stephen^w, for but speaking of the abolishing of the customs of Moses, must lose his life, though he spake but what Moses himself had spoken before, and what an angel had spoken

^r Talm. Sanh. p. 97.

^s Phil. iii. 2.

^t Rev. xxii. 15.

^u R. Dav. Kimch. on Isa. lix.

^v Gal. i. 14.

^w Acts, vi. 14.

after Moses; and though his face, when he was to answer for these things, shone like the face of Moses, and was like the face of an angel. But what need I to insist upon particulars? If you look throughout all the Acts of the Apostles, you shall find, that, almost in every place where the gospel came among the Jews, this was the main obstacle that ever lay in the way to hinder the freedom of its passage,—the fixedness of that people and nation to their ceremonies and traditions. Let one place suffice for many: “The Jews of Asia laid hands on Paul, crying out,—Men of Israel, help; this man teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place^x.”

The preaching of the gospel goeth against their heart, because it goeth against their customs; and he that speaketh against that people, law, and place, is sure to be spoken against himself; for they were so pinned unto the rites of those three, that there must be no thinking of their removal. And thus were they most corrupt in opinion concerning the ceremonies of the law, which they had used of old.

2. And so also were they concerning Christ, when he should come. They expected him to appear in the world as an earthly conqueror, like Naaman the Syrian by the prophet Elisha: “He thought, He will surely come out and stand, and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place and recover the leper^y,” and he only sent him this plain and simple message; “Go, wash in Jordan, and be clean:” so they by Christ; they conceited,—Surely he will come with great worldly pomp, and make his way with a conquering sword; he will destroy many people, even as earthly princes do, and seat his people in Canaan again, in more prosperity and pomp than ever: and he, on the contrary, came in the form of a servant; “he had no form nor comeliness^z” in the eyes of men, that they could desire him: he appeared in a posture of humility and lowliness, riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass^a.” And how far were they from entertaining such a Christ as this, when they expected one of a quality so infinitely different! Who could believe, that the title over our Saviour’s head, upon his cross, should be a stumbling-block unto the Jews’ feet? And yet was it so at that very time, when they fixed it there; and so it hath been ever since; and so it is at this

^x Acts, xxi. 28.

^y 2 Kings, v. 11.

^z Isa. liii. 2.

^a Zech. ix. 9.

very day,—“Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews^b.” They looked for the Messiah to come from Beth-lehem, and they knew him but for “Jesus of Nazareth.” And they expected a pompous “King of the Jews;” and how far was he from such a king! And thus “they knew not him^c,” when he came from Galilee, nor ‘the voices of the prophets,’ what they meant by his kingdom; and thus were they very far unlikely to receive him, when he came.

These three things, then, being thus considered, and notice taken how far this people of the Jews were gone away, both in life and doctrine,—what corruption they had contracted in their manners,—what doting upon their ancient customs, and what misprision concerning Christ; it is no wonder, if he, that came to reform these things that were so far amiss, had need of a spirited and a powerful forerunner, to make some way for him against he came.

And as it was at our Saviour’s coming in the flesh, so also is it at his coming in the Spirit. Whensoever Christ is to be brought in among a corrupt and irregular people, in the power and purity of his word and gospel, great hindrances do ever offer themselves to stop the way, and they had need of great forerunners to clear them thence. A Jerusalem is never built street and wall, but those ‘times are troublous^d ;’ and a reformation in a corrupted state is never wrought, but with these opposals. The very same things do make the ways rough and impassable for Christ’s coming now, in his work and power, that made it then, when he came in the flesh. These three are as “the snare upon Mizpah, and the net upon Tabor^e :” as the ambushes, that the idolatrous priests laid upon those mountains, to catch up all the passengers, that should go to Jerusalem to worship the true God, these catch up men, that they come not at Christ. These are the Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, that are ever ready to oppose the Moses and Aaron, that seek to work good in the congregation; and the Jannes, Jambres, and Egyptians, that affront them in the work of the Lord. And hence it is no wonder, that that work of the same nature, that you have had so long in hand, hath gone so slowly and so heavily on: for,

I. How truly is the moral of that story concerning Amnon, in 2 Sam. xiii, come to pass in these days of ours!

^b John, xix. 19.

^c Acts, xiii. 27.

^d Dan. ix. 25.

^e Hos. v. 1.

First, He was sick for love of his sister Tamar, and, having used her at his pleasure, he was then as sick for hate. So hath it been with us of this land: we were sick but a while ago for a parliament, and nothing would cure us, if we had not that; like David, we longed, and longed again, for this water of Beth-lehem, that is besides the gate, and could not rest till we had got it; and yet, when we have obtained it, and that not without the hazard of your lives, we now cast it upon the ground, and care not for it. We are now as weary of this manna, which God hath sent us, as we were desirous of it before it came. What should be the reason of men's such crossness and contrariety in their affections, as to will and to loathe, to desire and to detest, the same thing, with the same earnestness, in so short a time? Why, that in the prophet, "You would have healed Babel, and she will not be healed^f." Men are affrighted, I know not how, at the rumour of a reformation, because they are afraid to be stripped of their carnalities and corruptions. Like a simple patient, that, in an eating and corroding sore, if the surgeon can abate his pain, he likes it well; but to cut out any proud, dangerous, and corrupting flesh,—*that* he will not endure: just so hath it been with us. Whilst you eased us of the pains of those pressures, that did pinch; and took off the yoke from off our neck that galled so sore, it pleased us well, and you had our liking; but to be restrained any whit from our former and beloved sensualities,—to be straitened any thing of the extravagances of our former ways, by the reins of a reformation, O this goes to the quick, and we cannot endure it: 'Durus sermo,' a hard business, who can abide it? Our Saviour^g hath told us long ago, that parting with an old acquaintance, bosom-sin, is as pinching to the flesh and blood as 'to pluck out an eye, and to cut off a hand;' and we see it true by too woful experience, by man's inseparableness from their delights, they carrying them, and they them, and will not be parted, to perdition. The vine, olive, and fig-tree, in Jotham's parable^h, will not leave their wine, fatness, and sweetness, to gain a kingdom; Herod, his Herodias, to save his soul; nor men of corrupt manners, the corruption of their manners, for a blessed reformation.

This is the first adversary that you have in your way, that seeketh to cross the glorious work, that you have in

^f Jer. li. 9.^g Matt. v. 29, 30.^h Judg. ix. 9.

hand. And there is a second, which is like to this, as a twin of the same womb, and as bad as it; and that is, a corruption in opinion concerning ancient customs, and a fixedness to what our forefathers have used before.

2. Custom, as it is commonly said, is a second nature; and men cannot easily leave that, which they have long used themselves; and they will not easily leave that, which they have seen and known to be used by their predecessors. The Ephraimites, in the Book of Judges, that had been brought up to say ‘Sibboleth’ all their life, cannot say ‘Shibboleth’ to save their life,—but they perish, two-and-forty thousand. Famous and fearful is the story of Rabodus (some call him by another name); who, when he was so far persuaded from his heathenism into Christianity, that he had one foot in the water towards being baptized, and then asking,—Whither his forefathers were gone, that were not Christians nor baptized, whether to heaven or hell? and being answered, ‘To hell:’ he pulls his foot back again out of the water, with words to this purpose, ‘That he would go whither his ancestors were gone;’ and so he resolved to be what his ancestors had been. This, the more is the pity, is the ‘ultima analysis’ of the religion of too many thousands, in this land and time; men and women are too commonly and generally pinned in opinion, and in practice of religious things, upon the customs and usage of ancient times, and they are loath to be parted from them. The woman of Sychar was zealous for the temple upon mount Gerizim; but the best reason she can give for that her zeal, is but this, because “her fathers worshipped in that mountainⁱ.” Laban, in the marriage of his daughter Leah, will rather follow custom, than either custom or his own promise and covenant: he had agreed with Jacob for Rachel, and for Rachel had Jacob served; but, when it cometh to the point of performance, he suborneth Leah, and deceives him with her; and what is his reason? Why, it was not the custom of the country, to give the younger before the elder^k. How the predominancy of this humour in the diseased body of this church doth cause us to cast up again the wholesome physic of a reformation, it is known too well. The confession of the prophet may be taken up concerning us, and with addition, “We have sinned with our forefathers,”—nay, we are resolved so to do

ⁱ John, iv. 20.

^k Gen. xxix. 26.

still. The errors that the ignorance and dulness of former times did admit into the worship of God and profession of religion, we are resolved to retain, because they were the customs of former times.

3. And, thirdly, A main obstacle in the way of Christ's powerful coming among a people, and in the way of your work that seeks thus to bring him, is a corruption of opinion that men have concerning Christ or religion itself. Religion to carnal men must be a little gaudy, or else it cannot be a pleasing religion: as the Virgin Mary must be a lady, or she is not thought fit to be a saint. The simplicity and plainness of the gospel spoils its entertainment with sensual minds: and antichrist, by putting his religion in so gorgeous clothes, hath gained so much upon them, and stolen men's hearts through their eyes. God did once, indeed, comply with the gross dulness of the Jews, that he might win them; and because they could not go farther in religion, than they were led by the eyes, he gave them such a one as suited to them:—and because it was so with them once, carnal men would have it so still.

These are the three sons of Anak, with whom you have had so long to wrestle, and with whom you have to combat still, before you can bring our Israel to the desired Canaan. I may say again, that it is no wonder that this work in your hands goes so slowly on, when three such giants do seek to hinder it. You have to fight not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with the strong holds of Satan in the hearts of men. Oh! that we could find out some such powerful forerunners to go before you, as might clear the way for your readier passage! Where might we get so skilful a musician as could calm these evil spirits, that thus disturb all? It is far from my skill to advise you what to do in these respects: but to you others that sit by, and are spectators how these worthies labour under these opposals, this may show what need you have to drive on the great and weighty works, that they have in hand, with the earnestness of your prayers. Their hands, like those of Moses, it is no wonder if they be weary with holding up so long in so great employments; these must be the Aaron and Hur, that must support them, that they fall not quite. Methinks we may even see written in the very things that they are in managing, they are so weighty,—what Paul inserts to

so many of his Epistles, "Brethren, pray for us;" and, brethren, pray for them. I will conclude all in the words of the Psalmist, "Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth:" nay, let me change the number, for I know you will join with me in the saying, Let our tongues cleave to the roofs of our mouths, if we forget the parliament in our best devotions.—And so have I done with the first part that I named, the person and his function, that must do the work: now I come to the qualification of that person for that work and for his function; "He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias."

We meet, in this part, with two several parties, Elias and John, men exceedingly renowned in their generations, and exceeding great reformers in their times. Elias in the middle of the times of the law, and John in the beginning of the times of the gospel. We might deal with them as the prophet Ezekiel doth with his two sticks, with the names written upon them, Judah and Joseph: first, we might take in either hand one, and treat of them severally; then might we take them both into one hand, and, in our handling, they might become one; but we will take up such things concerning them only, as shall be most material to be considered, and most suitable to the present times.

And, first, we may lay this position, and the text will warrant it, That Elias shall never come to live and continue upon earth again. The prophet Malachi, indeed, delivereth it in such terms, as if he should come once again. "Behold, I will send you Elijah, the prophet." And the Septuagint have driven the nail to the head, to make this sense the surer, for they have added, "Behold, I send you Elias the Tishbite:" yet the angel Gabriel, in the text, doth tell us, that Elias himself is not to come in his own soul, but another in his spirit,—nor he in his own person, but it was John Baptist was to come in his power. And so our Saviour, Matt. xi. 14; "And if you will receive it, this is Elias which was to come:" and Matt. xvii. 12; "Elias (saith he) is already come;" which his disciples do truly understand of John the Baptist. The Jews¹, as they do erroneously hold, that the Messiah is not yet come,—so do they hold, also, that Elias shall personally come before his coming: and it is no won-

¹ De Elia præterito vid. R. Lev. Gersh. in 1 Reg. xvii.—De vent. vid. R. Dav. Kimch. in Mal. iv.

der that they err that error, mistaking the meaning of Malachi, when so many Christians do err the same error with them, though they have an exposition by an angel, and by our Saviour, upon that prophecy. Jansenius, Maldonate, and others of the same nest, Jesuits and Papists, explaining these words that we have in hand, do resolve, that they are more fitly to be applied to Elias's second coming, which is yet to be, than to his coming in the days of Ahab: and they gloss^m them thus, "He shall go before Christ at his first coming, in the spirit and power that Elias shall go before him in at his second." A gloss much like that senseless one of the sect in Epiphanius, upon these words in Gen. i. 27, "God created man in his own image;" whereon they seemed to hold, that the body of man was made after the image of God, and that Christ's human shape was the copy for the shape of Adam; whereas Adam was not made a man after the likeness of Christ, but Christ was made man after the likeness of Adam. Even so is it with these expositors. They either make John Baptist's going before Christ a pattern of Elias's doing the like,—whereas Elias, in the prophet, and in the text, is a pattern of John: or else they make Elias who is to come (no one can tell when), the copy or pattern of the Baptist already come; which is more than ridiculous. Nor is it so much to be wondered, that these men of corrupt judgments and minds should err this same error with the Jews, when we find so many of the fathersⁿ to have erred in the same opinion also; and to Elias they have added Enoch; and both these, they say, must come before the coming of Christ; for these they hold to be the two witnesses in the eleventh of the Revelation.

It is true, indeed, that some ones shall come in the spirit of Elias, towards the end of the world, according to that description in the Revelation^o; but no expectation of Elias himself, nor no description of Enoch at all. The two witnesses in that place are plainly characterized and deciphered forth by the emblems of Moses and Elias. "They have power to shut up heaven, that there be no rain^p;" here is a pregnant intimation of Elias: and, "They have power over the waters, to turn them into blood;" there is as pregnant a one of Moses. These two men do meet more

^m Sic etiam Beda in loc. et Ambr. Epiph. &c. Hæres. 70.

ⁿ Vid. Cornel. a Lapide in Apoc. xi. 3. Eleazer. ibid.

^o The two witnesses, Rev. xi. 3.

^p Ver. 6.

than once, mentioned together in the Scriptures. They are named together in the conclusion of the prophets, Mal. iv. 4; "Remember the law of Moses my servant;" and in ver. 5; "Behold, I send you Elias the prophet." They appeared together and attended our Saviour at his transfiguration^a. They are thought on together in that description of the two witnesses, as they also agreed together in this,—that the one was the giver of the law at the first, and the other the restorer of it, when it was decaying: the one, was the great prophet of the Jews,—the other, the great prophet of the Gentiles, as shall be touched anon. When, therefore, the Jews and the Gentiles shall be knit together into one church, upon the fulness of the one, and the conversion of the other,—then shall God raise up a powerful ministry to them both united, as in the spirit of Moses and Elias (the time of their preaching is alluded to the time of our Saviour's, three years and a half), and antichrist shall rise up against them, and persecute some of them to the death.

By the way, as we go, it is not immaterial to be observed, how things signifying and things signified, do often, in Scripture, bear one and the same name: sometime the thing signifying is called by the same name of the thing signified. As at the making of the first covenant^r, "Moses sprinkled the blood of the covenant upon all the people;" that is, upon the 'twelve pillars,' which he had set up to represent the people^s, as he had set up an altar also to represent God: for to besprinkle so many hundred thousands severally, it was impossible in so short a time as he employed in that work. And so, in the second covenant in the blood of Christ, the bread and wine, that represent his body and blood, are called by the very names of 'his body and blood.'

Sometimes the thing signified is called by the name of the thing signifying; as Hos. iii. 5; "Afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king;" that is, 'Christ their king,' which was signified by David: and so in the matter that we have in hand, the prophet Malachi calls the Baptist Elias, because he was so nearly represented and typified by Elias. To them that hold that Elias shall personally come again indeed, we

^a Matt. xvii. 3.^r Exod. xxiv. 8. Heb. ix. 19.^s Ver. 4.

may justly propose these two or three queries:—First, How shall a glorified body converse with bodies laden with corruption and mortality? Observe, at the transfiguration of our Saviour, when the glorified bodies of Moses and Elias appeared to him, the disciples were so incapable and unfit for conversing with them, that some of them spake they ‘knew not what.’ Consider the disproportion that is between angels and men, if I may so call it, in regard of converse,—the one, spirits,—the other, bodies,—how can these two be familiar together, if an angel take not on him a visible shape? There is not so much distance, indeed, betwixt bodies glorified and bodies mortal, yet is there so much as is sufficient to spoil the converse of each with other.

Secondly; What should Elias do in his person here? If ‘to preach,’ our Saviour hath told us, that “if men would not hearken to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded, though one rose from the dead^u :” and may we not infer, if men will not hearken to Moses, the prophets, the evangelists, and the apostles,—they will not believe, though Elias came from heaven, ‘to preach the gospel?’ If another than what was preached by Christ and his apostles, then is he accursed, though he be Elias. If the same,—why, that treasure is carried in earthen vessels^w, and not in vessels already glorified.—To destroy antichrist? This, indeed, is the common opinion: but Paul hath told us, that “the Lord shall do it with the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming^x.” Such questions as these might be proposed to that opinion, that is, indeed, of much like nature with this, but of far more strangeness; namely, that that would bring Christ from heaven again, to live personally on earth a thousand years. First; What should Christ, that is in heaven, blessed for ever, do a thousand years upon earth, that is cursed? The very first lesson that God taught Adam after he had taught him the lesson of Christ, was this,—that he should not expect Christ’s kingdom upon earth, for that he cursed^y. Secondly; How strange and improbable is it to conceive, that Christ,—who, in his human frailty, had a kingdom, which was called, and was ‘the kingdom of heaven,’—should now, in his immortal glory, come and possess a king-

^t Luke, ix. 33.^u Luke, xvi. 31.^v Gal. i. 8.^w 2 Cor. iv. 7.^x 2 Thess. ii. 8. Vid. Chald. Par. on Isa. xi. 4, in edit. Buxtorf.^y Gen. iii. 17.

dom on earth. An opinion, according to the censure of Eusebius, raised upon the misconstruction of a place in the last book of the New Testament, as this about Elias was of a place in the last book of the Old. For thus speaketh he concerning Papias, the first father of this conceit²:—"The same author also (saith he) showeth, that other things came to him by unwritten tradition, which contain certain strange parables of our Saviour, and new doctrines of his, and some other things stuffed with legendary fables. Among which he averreth, that the kingdom of Christ, after the resurrection of all flesh from the dead, shall continue and endure upon this earth, after a human and bodily manner, for a thousand years: which opinion I believe that he did entertain, because he misunderstood the apostolical interpretations, which were delivered to them under hidden figures, and obscure parables. For he was a man, as may be guessed by his writings, of a very shallow wit. Yet was he the author of the like error to most ecclesiastical men, who cited this man's antiquity for the defence of their part: as Irenæus, and whosoever else is of the same opinion with him."

I will not censure nor condemn the opinion, but refer it to superior examination; only this I cannot but say of it, that I do not remember that ever I heard or read of an opinion of so extreme and monstrous strangeness, that in so short a time hath gotten so great a belief, and so large an entertainment, and neither tongue nor pen hath stirred against it. It is our hope and prayer, that once you may have liberty and leisure from the great rent in the whole piece of the state, to look upon the rippings in the seams of the church, that such opinions as this and others may be taken either by you, or by your authority, into examination, before, like Joab and Abishai, the sons of Zeruiah, they grow too strong, and defy a trial.

"The spirit and power of Elias" is held by some to mean but one and the same thing, 'his powerful spirit.' So, indeed, sometime runneth the sense of the Hebrew style. As in that answer of our Saviour³, "I am the way, the truth, and the life;" the scope of the question that occasioned it, seemeth to call it to such a sense, "I am the true and the living way."

Others distinguish the meaning with the words; and, by

² Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. cap. 39.

³ John, xiv. 6.

‘the spirit of Elias,’ understand patience and tolerancy of persecution; and by the ‘power,’ the prevalent and efficacious virtue of his ministration. But we need not to go far for interpretations, when either the words are of no great difficulty,—or what they be of, will easily be explained by the Scripture itself.

By Elias’s ‘spirit,’ then, are we to understand, not his own within him, but the Spirit of the Lord^b, or of prophecy, upon him: and so his Spirit is said to be upon John, as Moses’s spirit was upon the elders^c, and the spirit of the same Elias upon Elisha^d.

By the “power of Elias” upon the Baptist, is not meant the power of miracles,—for John wrought none, whereas Elias did many,—but his power of preaching for the conversion of many unto God. So that whereas the ancient prophets of the law, and among them Elias, had a double power of the Spirit upon them, ‘To foretell things to come, and to work miracles,—so had John, the first prophet of the gospel, a double power, but of another nature and a letter. He foretold not things to come, but he explained those that had foretold him; and he wrought not miracles upon bodies, but he was miraculously powerful upon souls.

Now, should we come to compare Elias and the Baptist together, we should find them agree in many parallels: as, that they both came in very corrupt times,—that they both restored religion very much in that corruption,—that they were both persecuted exceedingly for that restoring, Elias by Ahab and Jezebel, and John by Herod and Herodias; and divers other agreements, upon which not to insist, because they be obvious to every eye, this collection may we take up from the words in hand,—that Elias is a proper and pregnant pattern for reformers.

As when Moses was making the sanctuary and the appurtenances, God often^e calls upon him to make all things according to the pattern, which was showed him in the mount,—so, in this like work of yours, which you have in hand, can you platform out a reformation by a better pattern than by Elias, since you will not do it but by some pattern from the mount? a man that, in the text, is a copy to John the Baptist in his reforming: and a man, that, in his own time, ‘re-

^b John, x. 41.^c Num. xi. 25.^d 2 Kings, ii. 15.^e Exod. xxv. 40; xxvi. 30; xxvii. 8; Heb. viii. 4, 5.

stored all things,' as our Saviour saith of him^b. And fitly, then, may he be a pattern for these times of ours.

He restored perishing religion, and the decaying law: he restored forgotten prophecy, and, as the Jews hold, forsaken circumcision: for of circumcision do they understand those words of Elias himself, "They have forsaken thy covenant^c." And of Elias, the restorer of circumcision, they^d misunderstand those words of the prophet, "The angel, or messenger, of the covenant^e."

But I stand not here as a surgeon over his anatomy, to read unto you a lecture of reforming, upon the skeleton of Elias,—it were beyond good manners, as it is beyond my skill. Let me address myself to you that sit by, and are spectators of these worthies, as they labour in their work,—in a word or two of application, and that according to the two words that are before us, 'the spirit of Elias and his power.'

1. By 'the spirit of Elias,' I told you, is understood the 'Spirit of God that was upon him.' Now, as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xii. 4; "The Spirit was but one, but the gifts were divers." For, look in the fourth of the Acts, and the thirty-first; it is said of the apostles there, that when they had prayed, the place was shaken, and "they were filled with the Holy Ghost." And so they had been some days before,—namely, on Pentecost-day^f. Now, they having been filled then, how can they be said to be filled again? Why, then, with the gift of tongues,—and now, with the gift of holy boldness? for, for that it was they prayed^g.

Among the divers gifts, then, of the Holy Spirit, that Elias had, this is not the last, nor the least, that made him renowned,—his extraordinary zeal for the Lord of hosts. So much expresseth he concerning himself, 1 Kings xix. 10. 14; and so much seemeth our Saviour to aim at, in his answer to his two disciples, that would have fire fetched from heaven, as Elias had done, "Ye know not (saith he) what manner of spirit ye are of^h;" of a zeal beyond your warrant, and you would be forward, you know not how. The thing that you may take notice of from hence, is this,—that no true reformation can be expected, which is not car-

^b Matt. xvii. 11.

^c 1 Kings, xix. 14.

^d Vid. R. D. Kimchi in Reg. et in Malach.

^e Mal. iii. 1.

^f Acts, ii. 4.

^g Ver. 29.

^h Luke, ix. 55.

ried on with a spirit of zeal. The works of God must be wrought with his Spirit; and they that desire to forward his glory, must do it with a holy forwardness. It is the honour of Leviⁱ, that, when he was about the employment of the Lord, he was so zealous in it, that he forgot all civil relations, “and said unto his father, and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children.” And so our Saviour, in the third of Mark, when his mother and kindred would have taken him off from preaching;—for they said “he will faint,” or, “he is beside himself^j,” be it whether it will, for the original word will bear both;—he was so zealous in the work in hand, that he would not own them, that came to hinder it; for, “he answered, saying, Who is my mother, and who are my brethren^k?”

2. The power of Elias in reformation, was exceeding much; and he did wondrous things in what he did, but yet he left exceeding much undone, which he could not help,—and abundance of corruption, which he could not remove. He took away Baalim, but he could not take away the golden calves; he destroyed the prophets of the one, but he could not destroy the prophets of the other. Four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal perished by his means at Carmel^l; and yet are there four hundred false prophets left, that seduce Ahab to go to Ramoth^m. Thus impossible is an utter extirpation of all corruption out of a state and church that is corrupt.

Lay these two now together in the two scales of an unprejudicate judgment, and they will help very well to balance and to poise aright your thoughts and censures concerning these worthies, that are toiling in our work. Some think they have been too forward, others think they have been too slow; some, that they have done too much,—others, that they have done too little; some complain of too much zeal, and some of too little reformation. To the former may be answered, that Elias must be zealous, if he will reform; to the latter, that Elias cannot utterly purge out all corruption, though he be Elias; and to both together, that, instead of

ⁱ Deut. xxxiii. 9.

^j Ἐξέστη, “he is besides himself,” in the Syriac, Arab. Vulg. Lat. Ital. of Diodati; the Spanish hath it, “he goeth out of his calling and estate:” in marg. ἐξέστη τῇ διανοίᾳ, in the LXX. Gen. xlv. 26.

^k Mark, iii. 33.

^l 1 Kings, xviii. 19. 40.

^m 1 Kings, xxii. 6, 7.

murmuring against them, it were far fitter to be thankful to God for them, for that he hath put so much zeal into their hearts, and so much reformation already into their hands, as that we see more already than we expected ever to have seen. The same Lord continue the same 'spirit' unto them, and increase the 'power,' that their hearts and their hands may hold up and grow strong,—that we may see the salvation of the Lord exerted by them, for the reconciling of the disaffected, and the reducing of the disobedient. And so I pass to the third part of the text, the work of the Baptist, "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," &c. The case was woful, when father and son had need of a reconciler to make them friends; yet was it theirs then, and so is it ours now.

It was a very hard task, surely, to John the Baptist, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, or to do this work; for I find it a very hard task and trouble to expositors to find out, and to resolve, who these fathers and children were.

Someⁿ, by 'the fathers,' understand the Jews, and by 'the children,' Christ and his apostles^o; and that John turned the hearts of the fathers to the children, when he brought the Jews to embrace their doctrine; but how can the other part be made good with this gloss, that he turned the heart of Christ and his apostles to the Jews?

Some render it thus:—"He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children," by the right understanding of the Scriptures; and, "the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous," by the obedience of faith: an exposition, that leaveth us as far to seek who were the fathers, and who the children, as we were before.

Others^p, therefore, come nearer the letter, and expound it from the difference that was at that time in opinions among the Jews; the father, it may be, a Pharisee, and one son a Sadducee, and another an Essene,—and John, by bringing them all to the entertainment of the gospel, extinguished that division, which opinions had set between them. It is true, indeed, that these three sects were among the Jews at the Baptist's coming^q,—the three shepherds which were to be destroyed in one month^r; but for any such di-

ⁿ Vide Carthus.

^o As Luke, xi. 19.

^p Maldon. in loc.

^q Joseph. Antiq. lib. 18. cap. 2.

^r Zech. xi. 8.

vision in sect betwixt father and sons, it is but a conjecture, and it cannot be so certainly averred.

But, farthest off of all other glosses, and the most improper, is that of Jansenius, and others of his feather, which yet they hold to be the nearest and the properest of all; and that is this:—That John turned “the hearts of the children to the fathers,” when he brought the Jews to whom he preached, or those of his own time, to embrace the faith and doctrine of the patriarchs that had been before;—and, “the hearts of the fathers to the children,” when, by reducing them thus to that faith, he occasioned that those holy men in limbo did begin to affect them, and take them to heart, which they had not done before. I will not stand to examine or convince this exposition, for it is not worth the labour; you, yourselves, have computed it in thought, I know, as soon as heard it. The most genuine and real meaning of the words that we have in hand, I conceive to be this:—That, by ‘the fathers,’ are to be understood the Jews, and by ‘the children,’ the Gentiles; and, by John’s turning each other’s heart unto other’s, his winning them both jointly and unanimously, to the knowledge and profession of Christ and of the gospel; and, by the tie of that, to the joint communion one with another. And I am made confident, and emboldened to entertain this exposition, as the very meaning of the place, upon these reasons:—

1. Because the church of the Gentiles is styled, by the name of the children of the Jews, commonly and constantly in the prophets: as Isa. liv. 13, “All thy children shall be taught of the Lord;” and, lx. 4, “Thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be turned at thy sight;” and, lxii. 5, “As a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee:” and in very many other places.

2. Because it was a special and peculiar work and office of the gospel, to unite and tie the Jew and the Gentile into one. So saith the apostle, “Christ is our peace, who hath made both one^s,” and the gospel the means; and then must it be the work and office of the Baptist, who began the gospel.

3. Experience, and the history itself, confirm this our exposition; for, as the gospel, in its own nature and promulgation, belonged to the Gentiles, as well as the Jews;

^s Ephes. ii. 14.

and, as John^m came for ‘a witness, that all through him might believe,’ the one nation as well as the other,—so did he baptize and convert some of the one as well as the other, Roman soldiers as well as Jewish Pharisees, and make them both, according to the phrase which Josephusⁿ useth of him, *Ἐν Βαπτισμῷ συνιέναι*, ‘to convent or knit together in his baptism.’

4. This exposition maketh John the more fully to resemble Elias, who was a preacher and a prophet to the Gentiles, as well as to Israel, nay, the first prophet of the Gentiles. This our Saviour toucheth, Luke iv. 25; “Many widows were in Israel, in the days of Elias, but to none was he sent, saving to one in Sarepta, a city of Zidon:” and the men of Nazareth, though but plain and rustic simple men, yet did they quickly understand it of preaching to the Gentiles, which put them into an anger, and our Saviour into a danger. Nor can we think that the holy and zealous prophet, residing in that heathen city, two or three years together, as appeareth by the text,—would live there idly, and doing nothing, but that he preached there, as well as he had done to Israel, whilst he was among them; for he was every where zealous for the Lord of hosts. I would this were but seriously thought on, in men’s expounding the prophecy about the two witnesses in the Revelation, which we touched before. —For if they would but see Elias there, which is so plainly emblemed and pictured out,—and withal but consider, that Elias was the first prophet of the Gentiles,—it would help to settle an interpretation to that place, which now hangs exceeding loose in diversity of opinions.

This being, then, the proper and only meaning of the words in hand,—that John, by his preaching, should ‘turn the hearts of the Jews to the Gentiles, and of the Gentiles to the Jews;’ and by his baptism should, as it were, tie them up together; the observation, or collection, that we may take up from hence, is this,—that true religion is the truest reconciler. There is no peacemaker like the gospel; but it is among them, that are true professors of the gospel.

Nor is there any breed-bate like the gospel neither: and so saith our Saviour, “Suppose you, that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell ye, Nay; but rather division^o:” which he speaketh out more plainly by another evangelist; “I

^m John, i. 7.ⁿ Joseph. Ant. lib. 18. cap. 7.^o Luke, xii. 51.

came not to send peace, but a sword^p." But this is between the two seeds, betwixt whom God hath set enmity^q, and there can be no reconciliation, the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent: but to the children of the same father, God,—and of the same mother, the church,—the gospel is the sweet messenger of peace, and the sweet peacemaker.

A deadlier hate could not be betwixt man and man, than was of the Jew towards the Gentile. They reputed them as dogs; and so our Saviour^r useth their common phrase, "It is not good to take the children's bread, and give it to dogs:" they reputed them as swine, and accordingly they render that verse of the eightieth Psalm, "The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it:" they abhorred their society, nay, they abhorred the very mention of their conversion^s. And yet, when true religion cometh in, and seizeth both the Jew and Gentile,—the hate is forgotten, the feud is gone, and the deadly enemies are the nearest friends^t. Much like as it is reported concerning Cairo in Egypt, that if the plague rage never so much over-night, that they die by thousands, yet, if the river Nilus come flowing in the next day, the mortality is ceased, and there dieth not one: even so is it with religion: be there never so much bitterness and heart-burning betwixt man and man, never so much contention and contestation betwixt neighbour and neighbour,—if the power of religion do but once flow in and seize them both, the plague is ceased, the malignity gone.

This is that that cries down the partition-walls of all divisions: this is the great tie of men's affections,—yea, it is the greatest; this is the matrimony of souls, making two men to be of one spirit, as the other doth a man and a woman to be one flesh. It is Christ which is the truest cause of making men offended, to be reconciled in a good sense,—as he was the occasion of Herod's and Pilate's being so in a bad. With what spleen and rancour did Saul set for Damascus, against the professors there? Yet, when Christ comes into him by the way, no greater friend than Paul to them, when he comes near them. For,—

1. Religion is a special and sovereign means to calm, tame, and cicurate, those exorbitant affections, and extra-

^p Matt. x. 34.

^q Gen. iii. 15.

^r Matt. xv. 26.

^s Luke, iv. 28. Acts, xxii. 22.

^t Acts, xi. 18.

vagant humours, that breed division, and maintain it. The prophet Isaiah^u, describing the power of the gospel in the Christian church, saith, "That it shall bring the wolf to dwell with the lamb, the leopard to lie down with the kid, the calf and the young lion to feed together, and the cow and the bear to go in company." His allusion is to the carriage of the beasts in the ark of Noah: before they came in thither, the lion was ravenous, and the lamb his prey,—the leopard and the bear devouring, and the kid and the calf afraid to come near them: but when they were come within the ark, there was no such thing,—all bloodiness and rapine was laid aside; and the lamb and lion couch together, and the lion now as harmless as the lamb. So is it in the church, and so is it by the power of religion: those humours and passions of men, which before have been bloody, cruel, proud, self-willed, dissentious, and rebellious,—if once the powerful operation of religion get in among them, it quells these rebels, quenches these firebrands, reduces these extravagants, and, like the dispossessed in the gospel, makes him to sit calmly and quietly, and in his right mind, whom none might come within the compass of before, without a danger.

2. Religion doth centre men's affections in the centre of unity, God himself, and those things that concern God, that they cannot separate: it is an old saying, 'Quæ conveniunt in uno tertio, conveniunt in terse,' 'Those things that agree in a third thing, agree among themselves:': then, how many third things are there, in which true Christians meet as lines in a centre, that must needs hold them together, and make them agree! St. Paul hath reckoned them to our hands, in the fourth to the Ephesians, the fourth, fifth, and sixth verses:—they meet "in one body, in one spirit, in one hope of their calling, in one Lord, one faith, one baptism, in one God and Father of all."

3. Religion maketh conscience of living in division, and giving offence; it dares not offer its gift at the altar, till it and the offender be reconciled. It dares not suffer the sun to go down upon its wrath, nor will eat that meat, that shall offend a weak brother: and, as the father in another sense, accounts it as desperate to sleep in malice, as to go to bed in a den of lions. The use that we may make of this, may

^u Isa. xi. 6, 7.

be double; and briefly thus, because I know not your hours and occasions, and I fear to offend.

First, This may direct us very well in the choosing of a friend. Would we have one, that shall be true to us? Let us look out such a one, as is true to God. Would we have one, that shall be faithful in our little things, in our affairs? Let us seek out such a one, as is faithful in the great thing, in religion. As Gregory's counsel was, to agree to Austin^v, if he were humble,—so be it our holy policy to tie to that man in friendship, that is religious: and as Jehu to Jonadab, 2 Kings x. 15; if we light on a man, whose heart is right towards the Lord, as we desire a friend's heart should be to us,—let us fix on that friend, and give him the hand.

Secondly, This also may show us who cannot be our friend, and with whom it is impossible to have unity and amity; namely, with the church of Rome, which is clean antipodes to us in religion.

“Is there peace, Jehu?” saith Joram to him. “No, there is no peace, where whoredoms and witchcrafts are so many^w.” No communion can be betwixt Christ and Belial, or betwixt religion and idolatry: for so I conceive the word Belial^x signifieth throughout the Scripture. The enmity that God himself fixed at the very beginning betwixt the seed of the serpent, and the seed of the woman, must continue unreconciled to the very end: and as ‘quos Deus conjunxit,’ ‘whom God hath joined together,’ no man whatsoever must put asunder; so what God hath parted and put asunder, no man must offer to join together. Who are the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent, so plain to be seen, as Christ and antichrist? And he that will seek to make conjunction of Rome and us, will marry light and darkness, God and the devil, Christ and antichrist together; and make a friendship betwixt those, betwixt whom God himself hath doomed an enmity, while the world endureth.

We bless God, that hath brought us out of her familiarity and friendship, to be now her haters and hated of her: and we bless the time, when we first fell from the society and converse of Egypt, to be her enemies, and at distance with her: and we bless you and your endeavours, that strive so much, and so constantly, to keep us clear of all re-engage-

^v Acts and Mon. old edit. p. 107.

^w 2 Kings, ix. 22.

^x Belial; i. e. an idol. The children of Belial; i. e. idolaters.

ments. And may the work prosper in your hands, and you in the work, to hold us still at our proper distance to the seed of the serpent, and to keep us at enmity, where God hath set it! but for turning ‘the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the reducing of ‘the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,’ it is our prayer still and still, as it was before, that you may have the power of Elias, or the Baptist, as you have the spirit: and so I come to the last part of the text, and the second part of John’s work in his ministration, “To turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.”

These words, as they lie in our English translation, do show no great difficulties; but being examined in the original, they are not so very easy. A main scruple that appears in both, is this: that the angel, undertaking to quote the prophet, should so far now decline from his text. In the former part, that we have newly handled, he followeth him punctually and ‘verbatim;’ “He shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,”—so saith the prophet, and so the angel; but now that he should have taken up the other part in these words, “And the hearts of the children to the fathers,” he changeth them into this clause, “And the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.” But to this may be answered; 1. That the angel is not so punctual to cite the very letter of the prophet as to give the sense. And so we may observe it to be usual in the New Testament, in its allegations from the Old. And that he giveth the same sense, or a true interpretation of the prophet, we shall see as we go. 2. It was not very long after the baptizing and preaching of John, that the Jews ceased to be a church and nation,—nay, even in the time of him himself, they showed themselves enemies to the gospel, and to the professors of the same, for the general or greatest part of them; therefore, he saith, not that the hearts of the children, the Gentiles, should be turned to their fathers, the Jews, which should cease to be fathers, and to be a people,—but “to the wisdom of the just.” And thus, in the first part of his speech about turning “the hearts of the fathers to the children,” he intimateth the Jews, that should be reconciled and united to the Gentiles, in embracing the gospel: and in this latter, by omitting to call them ‘fathers,’ he giveth a touch of the hostility and evil mind, that the others of the Jews should bear, both to it and to the Gentiles that embraced it. And

now that we see the reason and difference in the allegation, let us take up the words that thus differ, every one single, and one after another, as they lie in order; and would the time permit, every word would afford us matter profitably to insist upon; but I will only hint it as we go along, for I fear to offend in transgressing the time.

1. As in this clause he refuseth to use the term of 'fathers,' for the reason mentioned,—so doth he also of the correlative 'children,' because of his refusing of that. And yet he coucheth the sense of that title, under the word 'disobedient,' which, in its most proper and natural signification, reflecteth upon untowardly children, disobedient to their parents. For though there be a disobedience to any superior whatsoever,—as to kings, magistrates, masters, and the like,—yet is the obedience of children to parents the original, from whence it receiveth denomination, and that appeareth in that those superiors are called 'fathers.' As, therefore, the angel, omitting to call the Jews 'fathers,' insinuateth their opposition against the gospel,—so, by terming the Gentiles 'disobedient' instead of 'children,' he showeth what they were, before they embraced it.

The Vulgar Latin, instead of 'disobedient,' readeth 'incredulous,' or unbelieving^a; which though the Greek word doth sometimes signify, as might be evidenced in divers instances, yet that it doth not so in this place, may be collected from these considerations:—First, That the speech is concerning children and fathers, as is apparent in the clause preceding, and between them 'disobedience' is a more proper term and notion than 'incredulity.' Secondly, That he saith not, 'He shall turn them to the faith,' which were the most proper if he spake of the unbelieving,—but to the 'wisdom' of the righteous. And, thirdly, That the preaching of the Baptist was more especially the doctrine of repentance, as his baptism was "the baptism of repentance^b;" but the preaching of Christ was the doctrine of faith. Therefore John saith only, 'Repent^c,'—but our Saviour, 'Repent, and believe^d.'

Now, from this double signification of the original word, and, indeed, also, from the proper cause of the heathen's dis-

^a Ἀπειθεῖς, disobedient, or unbelieving.

^b Mark, i. 4.

^c Matt. iii. 2.

^d Mark, i. 15.

obedience, we might observe, that a chief and main cause of disobedience is unbelief.

It is a saying of the Jews^e, in their Talmud, in the treatise 'Maccoth,' "that all those six hundred and thirteen commandments, that God gave to Moses in mount Sinai, are reduced to this one in the prophet Habakkuk, The just by his faith shall live^f:" we may say something the like concerning sins; that those hundreds and thousands of transgressions, that are committed in the world, and all those various and numerous causes and occasions from whence they proceed, they may all, in fine, be traced and reduced to this one original,—from unbelief. From whence is it that men do violate the commands of the law? because they will not believe the threatenings upon the violation. And whence is it, that men refuse the promises of the gospel? because they will not believe the certainty and excellency of those promises.

2. The word 'wisdom,' in this place, doth signify 'religion,' as it doth in divers other places of the Scripture: as Deut. iv. 6; "Keep, therefore, and do the statutes and commandments of the Lord, for this is your wisdom;" that is, your religion. And so, likewise^g, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;" that is, the fear of the Lord is the entry into religion. And so may we find the word to signify in divers passages in the Proverbs. And to this sense, methinks, Eliphaz scoffeth religious Job in the fourth of that book and the sixth verse, if it be looked into in the original. "Halo jireatheca chislatheca," 'Is not thy fear,' or thy religion, become 'thy folly^h?'

"Religion is the only wisdom; and to be truly wise, is to be truly religious" (which is the observation that we might take up upon this word): "but where or what (saith this miserable comforter) is this religious wisdom of thine become now? Thou hast been thus and thus precise and devout, thus and thus pious and religious; and what is now become of all this great devotion, but a fearful affliction? 'Is not now thy religion become thy folly?'"

But there is yet a double scruple, and those no small ones neither, in this small clause or parcel of *Ἐν φρονήσει*, "To the wisdom."

^e Rab. Abhuhabh. in Ner. 1.

^f Hab. ii. 4.

^g Psal. cxi. 10.

^h כסלה: folly. Psal. lxxxv. 9.

First, It is something harsh to translate the Greek word *ἐν* in this place to signify ‘to:’ for though it do sometimes signify so, as commentaries quote certain other places, to justify that translation of it in this, yet, 1. That is but rarely and but somewhat improperly, wheresoever it is so used; and, 2. It cannot be imagined, that if the angel intended that very sense of ‘to’ in this place, as to say, “to the wisdom,” but that he would have used the word *ἐπὶ*, which he used immediately before in the other clause, and say, *ἐπὶ φρόνησιν*, as he had said *ἐπὶ τέκνα*, and not have betaken himself to a construction of the preposition *ἐν*, harsh, scrupulous, and unusual. I conceive, therefore, that that little particle is to be taken here, in its most proper, genuine, and general, sense, and as it is used millions of times in Greek authors, to signify ‘in:’ and to be interpreted “in the wisdomⁱ.” And “the wisdom of the righteous” is not here to be held the ‘terminus ad quem,’ or the ultimate end to which these ‘disobedient’ Gentiles were to be converted; but the ‘medium per quod,’ the means or way, through which they were to be converted to God. For let the two clauses of this speech of the angel, or the parts of the work of the Baptist be laid in antithesis or opposition one against another, as naturally, indeed, they lie; the one aiming at the Jews, as the proper subject,—and the other at the Gentiles, the subject as proper,—and then will it appear very plainly, that two several acts were to be performed by the Baptist as concerning the Jews and their conversion. First, That he should turn their hearts or affections to God; as it is laid down in the verse preceding, “He shall turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.” And, secondly, That he should turn their hearts and affections also to the Gentiles; as it is in this, “He shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.” According, therefore, to this double work of John upon the Jews in that part of the angel’s speech, must the like duplicity be looked for in this, that concerneth the Gentiles, and to be understood, though it be not expressed. For the angel, in this part, purposely changeth his style, and neither calleth the Gentiles ‘children,’ but ‘disobedient,’ because they generally were so before the coming of Christ; nor the Jews ‘fathers,’ because they ceased to be so shortly after, as was touched before; nor mentioneth he the Gentiles’

ⁱ Ἐν φρονήσει. “In the wisdom.”

turning to God, but includeth it; partly he had set that as the chiefest bent and work of the Baptist, to turn men to God,—and partly he involveth it in this phrase, “in the wisdom of the righteous.” So that this being the meaning of the angel, as I doubt not but it is, it may afford us this observation,—that there can be no true conversion unto God, but in the true religion, or in the wisdom of the just.

Secondly; The word *φρονήσει*, which cometh next into our handling, will afford a twofold consideration:—1. That it is not without divine reason, that ‘the hearts of the Gentiles are not said to be turned to the Jews,’ as, on the contrary, it was said of ‘the Jews to the Gentiles,’ but that they should be turned “in the wisdom of the righteous.” For the enmity and feud, detestation and averseness, that was betwixt Jew and Gentile, and Gentile and Jew, proceeded not from the same cause and original. The Jew abhorred the Gentile, not of ignorance, but of scorn and jealousy, partly because they stood upon their own privilege of being the people of God, which the other were not,—and partly, because they were provoked with suspicion, that the other might be the people of God, when they should not be. And, therefore, when the reconciliation is to be wrought between them, it is said, that their hearts or affections should be ‘turned’ to them; for they were point-blank and diametrically against them before. But the Gentile abhorred a Jew out of ignorance, because of his religion,—hating him as a man separate from, and contrary to, all the men in the world; accounting that to be but singular and senseless superstition, which was indeed the divine command and wisdom, whereby he sequestered that people for his own, from all other people on the earth. So that a Gentile did not so much detest the person of a Jew for himself, as for his religion and profession, which, ignorant as the heathen were, they understood not what it meant. Therefore, when the Gentiles must be brought to knit and to unite to the Jews, it must be “in the wisdom of the righteous,” or in the embracing of that religion, which the righteous ones among the Jews professed,—and which the Gentiles, till they knew and understood what it meant, accounted but vanity, singularity, and folly.

2. It is remarkable, that the angel doth forsake the proper and common word used to signify ‘wisdom,’ which is

σοφία, and taketh up φρόνησις, which is of a something stricter and stranger use^a. And so doth the Syriac relinquish ‘hheckmetho,’ its ordinary word that it useth for ‘wisdom,’ and fixeth upon ‘jedhangto,’ a word more singular, and of more peculiar importance. The original word, then, that we have in hand, doth not only import the wisdom or religion of the Jews, but also the Gentiles’ attaining to the knowledge and apprehension of that religion and wisdom with them; not only the theory and practice of the Jewish nation in their religious profession, but the heathens’ reaching to the understanding of those mysteries in that religion and profession, which they had accounted such vanity and senselessness before. So that this word, considerably looked into, will afford us this collection,—That it is not enough to embrace the true religion in outward profession, but we are to have understanding, and to be acquainted with the doctrine and principles of that religion. For the heathen to turn to the ‘wisdom of the righteous’ Jews, in an outward profession, and an ignorant religiousness, was a poor conversion, as good as none, a work unfit the pains of the Baptist; but their true turning and his powerful work, is, when they are brought to embrace that religion in the knowledge and understanding of the mysteries of it. Ignorance was never the mother of any devotion, but of a Romish devotion, which is as good or as bad as none.

And, lastly, there is some doubtfulness also in the last word Δικαίων; for it may be indifferently translated ‘of righteous things,’ or ‘of righteous men:’ but it is the more undoubted, that persons and persons are rather here compared together than persons and things: in the former part of this work of the Baptist, there are fathers and children,—and in this part it is most like, that they are answered with persons again, disobedient children and righteous fathers, and the meaning of the angel to be this,—that as the Jews, the fathers in the embracing of the gospel, shall be turned to God, and reconciled to the Gentiles,—so the Gentiles, the children, in the wisdom of the righteous, or in the embracing and understanding of the religion professed by the righteous ones that had been and were among the Jews, should be turned to God, and in affection to the Jews. And hereupon might we take up this observation,—That the faith of the holy

^a 1 Cor. ii. 4—6. Rev. xiii. 16, &c.

Jews, under the law, and of the holy Gentiles, under the gospel, was one and the same. They that went before Christ in the one, and they that followed Christ in the other, did both cry, "Hosanna to the son of David,"—did both obtain salvation, by the same Saviour, and by the same way.

And so have I gone with the words, as far as I dare be bold upon the time, your patience, and occasions. I will but put this last clause together, which I have thus taken piecemeal, and laid asunder, and so have I done;—"The disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous," the heathen to the knowledge of the true religion. Methinks, in these words, we may behold the condition of this land, as it hath been in ancient times, and as it is in these of ours. We were once 'lo-ammi,' no people of the Lord's, and utter aliens from his congregation: we sat, and that not very long ago 'in darkness, and in the shadow of death;' and it is no wonder, if we might be called 'disobedient:' but God, who is good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works^k, hath come in unto us, and shone upon us. He hath discharged us of the name of heathens; O, that we could discharge ourselves of the title of 'disobedient!'—He hath brought us "into the wisdom of the righteous," unto the knowledge of the gospel, and of salvation; O, that we could drive on through that to God! He hath made us more Israel than Israel itself; and whereas we were once the farthest off of any nation from this wisdom, he hath brought this wisdom to us, to no nation nearer. Now, what thankfulness doth so great a mercy call for, for its bestowing! and what prayers for its continuance! Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which thus hath visited his people with his gospel, and redeemed them out of the darkness of superstition. And the blessing of the God of Israel be still upon his own gift, that it may continue and still flourish among us. Let not the candle, which he himself hath lighted, be ever put out: nor let the candlestick, which he himself hath placed, be ever moved out of its place: let scattered Popery never cloud us again, nor superstition overwhelm us. Let religion and the gospel be in all our borders, and peace and truth in all our times.

And to these our praises, and to these our prayers, let all the people say, Amen. Amen and Amen.

^k Psal. cxlv. 9.

A SERMON^a,

PREDACHED BEFORE

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

AT

MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER,

UPON THE 26th DAY OF AUGUST, 1645, BEING THE DAY OF
THEIR SOLEMN MONTHLY FAST.

*To the Honourable House of Commons, assembled in
Parliament.*

IF ever sermon met with disadvantages, whereby it might be made unacceptable to an auditory, this was it; for, besides mine utter disabilities to prepare any thing fit for so learned and discerning ears and judgments; the two things that might spoil delivery, when the child, such as it was, was come to the birth, were come upon me,—and these were, straitness of time, and perplexity of spirit; for, the fear of stopping your other occasions did so still lie before me, and the fear of mine own poor family in the inundation of the enemy in the association at that very instant, did so follow me, that in this strait between these two, I stood your orator at that time.

Yet, I see it is not in vain, but a comfort and happiness, to labour to serve and obey you, seeing your acceptance cherisheth and encourageth such poor endeavours.

The subject I fixed upon, I purposely chose, that the millenary opinion, which I cannot but judge erroneous, might not go on altogether uncontrolled, and one man take it at another for a truth, without gainsaying; but, that it might receive some check by the way, and it might be showed, that “posse vinci Hannibalem,” that there is a fair possibility, that that opinion is but a falsehood. Errors sometimes, and uncertainties often, do get the repute of un-

^a Not in the English folio-edition.

doubted truths, by going too long uncontradicted. As I cannot but challenge that opinion, which is so current and common, and hath so long run from hand to hand for an unquestioned certainty, that now it is become unquestionable; and that is, that the supper mentioned in the thirteenth of John's Gospel, was the Passover-supper,—and that Judas's going out after the sop, was his departure away before the sacrament: whereas, if it be not certain, which to me it is, and, I conceive, may be very well proved to others, that that supper was not the Passover, but a common supper; and that it was not at Jerusalem, but at Bethany, fifteen furlongs off; and that it was not on the Passover-night, but two nights before:—if this, I say, be not absolutely certain at the first sight, as to convince of its certainty, yet is it very well worth the weighing,—and the contrary opinion not to be suffered to go unexamined, which, among the most men, it doth.

Your Honourable House weigheth all things; the Lord hold out and reveal his will to you more and more, and crown all your undertakings and consultations with all prosperity and success.

Your servant in the Lord,

JOHN LIGHTFOOT.

Septemb. 12, 1645.

REV. XX. 1, 2.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand.

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

Now, I would this angel would bow the heavens and come down, and bring his chain with him, and bind the devil now,—for never was there more need, never was it more time; for, if ever he were loose, he is loose in these times; and, if ever he raged, he rageth in this nation. Alas! for the inhabitants of England, for the devil is come down among them, having great wrath,—and yet we know not how

long his time is. How lamentable and doleful is it, that that prophecy should ever be so true of us (which is uttered against Babel), as it is proved to be at this day, that Zijim, and Ijim, and Ohim, satyrs, and fiends, and devils, should dance and domineer, and rage and ravine, as they do in this nation; and when and how they shall be restrained, we cannot tell! Only, there is some comfort in the text,—and this, indeed, is all the comfort we have,—that the angel, in the text, can master the devil, if he will but do it, and he hath a chain in his hand, that will bind him, if he will but tie him in it.

The text is held to be the hardest piece in all the Bible, by many degrees; for, as prophetic writings are the difficultest pieces of all the Scripture, and the Revelation of all prophetic writings,—so is this chapter of all the Revelation, and these verses of all this chapter; and so doth a learned countryman^a of our own censure upon this place,—that it is “*Res omnium totius Scripturæ propheticae abstrusissima maximeque admiranda:*” “A matter, the most abstruse of any part of the prophets’ writings, and the most to be admired.” I might spend the time that is allotted me, to produce the opinions, and the arguments to prove those opinions, that are given upon this place. But I shall but tell you, that some Popish writers^b apply this prophecy and victory of the angel in the text, to the pope; some to pope Calixtus the Second, who bound the dragon, say they, when, by an anathema, he caused Henry the Fourth to renounce the custom of installing bishops and abbots:—others, to pope Innocent the Third, who bound the devil by approving the orders of the Dominicans and Franciscans. I need say no more; such expositions as these, it is more than enough to have but named them.

I shall but tell you, neither, that some expositors, of a better school^c, apply this victory of the angel over the dragon, to Constantine’s conquering of Maxentius Herculeus and Licinius, those persecuting emperors; and that he bound the devil, when he ended tyranny and persecution, which had continued against the church so long; and so they will have the thousand years to begin from him.

But I must do more than barely tell you, that the gloss and exposition upon this prophecy, which hath got the deepest root, and the highest seat in the hearts and estima-

^a Mr. Mede in loc.

^b Vid. Marlorat, in loc.

^c Brightman.

tions of very many in these times, and carrieth the greatest cry with it, is the opinion of the Chiliasts of old, refined by the Millenaries alate, which take this matter about the thousand years, strictly and exactly according to the very letter; an opinion so strange to me, that, I must confess, I could not but make it a sad omen and presage a good while ago, what opinions we should fall into in time, when such an opinion as this could be so swallowed down and entertained, as I saw it was.

I say, such an opinion as this:—

That, when antichrist is destroyed, the Jews shall be called,—their calling shall be home to the land of Canaan (for let me take up all the shreds of this opinion that I find scattered in the writings of the abettors of it),—that Christ shall have a glorious reign here upon earth,—that himself shall personally and visibly dwell here among his saints,—that this glorious time shall last a thousand years,—that Satan, all this while, shall be bound, so that there shall not be the least disturbance or trouble in the church, but all prosperity and sunshine,—that these thousand years are that that is called ‘the day of judgment,’—that this day of judgment, of a thousand years’ long, shall begin with a bodily resurrection of all the dead,—and, the beginning of these thousand years is conceived, by some, to be but about one-and-twenty years off:—thus, the exposition of this place, according to that opinion.

I shall not trouble nor tire your patience with the examination of the truth of these particulars: I shall only lay before you, six groundless and mistaken principles, as I conceive,—from whence, I apprehend, this exposition and opinion to have risen, and refer them to your own censure and judgment; three from this chapter that is before us, and three from other places in the Scripture.

First; The maintainers of this opinion seem not to have taken proper and serious notice of one phrase in this chapter, which the Holy Ghost hath twice mentioned, that it might be sure to be taken notice of; and that is, That Satan is bound for a thousand years, that he should not deceive the nations; for so is it expressed, in plain terms, in the third verse, upon his binding, and so is it hinted and intimated in the eighth verse, upon his loosing. Now, this opinion of the Millenaries speaks much of Satan’s binding, so that

there shall be no persecution nor offensiveness in the glorious church they dream of, but all peace and happiness, and tranquillity and glory; whereas this prophecy speaks of no such matter. It speaks not a word of Satan's binding, that he should 'not persecute the church;' but it speaks of Satan's binding, that he should not 'deceive the nations.' And, how vast a difference there is betwixt 'persecuting' and 'deceiving,' and betwixt the 'church' and the 'nations,' may be referred to any one to judge; and the missing to observe, pressly, this phrase and this difference, is to miss of the very key that letteth in to the understanding of this prophecy.

Secondly; As this doubled phrase is little observed, so another doubled one is much observed, but as much misinterpreted,—and that is, of the first resurrection, of which there is mention in the fifth and the sixth verses. For, though they will not deny the Apocalyptic to speak in borrowed phrases and figurative speeches, all along his book hither,—yet here they will have him to speak nakedly and literally, without any such borrowing, and to mean the very bodily rising of the martyrs from the dead; whereas, in all this chapter, there is not one word of their 'bodies arising,' but of their 'souls living;' nor one word of their 'living on earth,' but of their 'reigning with Christ.'

Thirdly; They conceive, that the very method and place of this chapter, in which it lies, doth infer their gloss and interpretation; for that mention being made of the ruin of antichrist, in the next chapters before, and of Christ's kingdom for these thousand years,—so, immediately after, in this, they think it must not be denied, that these thousand years must not be begun, till antichrist be ruined: whereas, the method of the evangelist, if it be pressly followed, will appear of a clean differing scope.

For as Moses, in the Book of Exodus, hath three times^e described the fabric and fashion of the Jewish tabernacle, in the pattern, in the making, and in the setting-up; and hath made a fourth^f summary of all the materials that went to the making of it, though they were named in the other: even so hath the evangelist done by the description of the Christian church, in this book. From the beginning of the fourth chapter, to the end of the eleventh, he hath described its state and persecution, but the persecutor is not named:

^e Exod. xxv, &c; xxxvi, &c; and xl.

^f Exod. xxxv.

from the beginning of the twelfth chapter, to the end of the nineteenth, he hath described its state and persecution, and pointed the persecutor out: in this chapter, he sums up in brief, what he had spoken in the two other parts at large; and in the two chapters following, he sets his tabernacle up in her perfection, and describes the church in her holiness, and communion, and participation of Christ.

It is not proper, for this time and place, to insist upon the proof and confirmation of this, to be the evangelist's meaning and method, which might clearly be done; I refer it to your own thoughts and consideration. And, as the parties, that we are dealing withal, do thus mistake and misconstrue upon this chapter,—so do they also upon other places of the Scripture.

For, fourthly, they hold, that Rome is the fourth beast, or monarchy, or kingdom, in Daniel; and because that Daniel hath told, in his second and seventh chapters, that after the destruction of the fourth beast or kingdom, Christ's glorious kingdom shall be set up,—they therefore imagine, that this kingdom of Christ is yet to come, and yet shall not come till antichrist shall be destroyed, which they hold to be a part of the fourth monarchy: whereas, to let pass divers other reasons, which might sufficiently prove the contrary, Daniel himself, in his seventh chapter, at the eleventh and twelfth verses, doth show most plainly, that it is impossible, that the fourth beast should mean the Romans; for he there telleth expressly, that even when the fourth beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame, the rest of the beasts had indeed their dominion taken away, but yet their lives were prolonged: now, what sign of life shall be to be found of the other three monarchies, when antichrist shall be destroyed, it is utterly unimaginable to apprehend.

Fifthly, And which is much agreeable to the former, they conceive that Daniel prophesieth of antichrist: of whom he speaketh not one word, nor treateth of any particular times or stories of the gospel, but only holdeth out that general prophecy, which all the prophets did, with one consent, of the calling of the Gentiles, and of Christ's glorious kingdom among them in the gospel. For it is a groundwork necessarily to be laid by him, that will make any thing of the Book of Daniel, and of the Revelation; that where Daniel

endeth, John beginneth, and goeth no farther back,—and where John beginneth, Daniel endeth, and goeth no farther forward. For Daniel sheweth the state and the persecutors of the church of the Jews, from the building of Jerusalem by Cyrus, to the destruction of it by Titus,—and he goes no farther. And there, where the beloved prophet concludeth, the beloved disciple^f beginneth, and taketh at him in this book; and sheweth the state and the persecutors of the Christian church, from the destruction of Jerusalem, to the end of the world; and revealeth a new Jerusalem coming down from heaven, when the old one on earth is destroyed; and one persecuting monarchy and state of Rome, equalling, in mischief and cruelty against the church, all the four that had gone before it.

Sixthly, and lastly, they hold, that antichrist shall be destroyed, before the Jews shall be called; which is not only not to be proved by any Scripture throughout all the Bible, but easily to be disproved both by Scripture and reason; and it were no hard task to show, if it were seasonable, that the eleventh chapter of this Book, by the killing of the two witnesses, intendeth persecution against the two churches, Jews and Gentiles, when they shall be knit together at the Jews' calling.

Upon these six foundations is that opinion built, which in itself is so exceeding strange, and yet (which is as strange) is so exceedingly entertained: I leave the balances in your hands, to weigh the weight or the lightness of them; and now crave a little leave, to present you with six other particulars, on the other hand, for the clearing and explaining of the text before us.

First, therefore, by Satan's 'deceiving of the nations' (from which he is bound up in the text, that he shall do so no more), is to be understood, that blindness and ignorance in which he kept the heathen for so many hundreds of years, before the appearing of the gospel, deceiving them with strong delusions to believe lies, especially with his two great cheats and cozenages that misled all the world,—idols and oracles: and that this is the meaning of that phrase, 'deceiving the nations,' may be concluded upon, not only by the term 'nations,'—nor only by the truth of the thing itself, for that was the great deceiving of the world,—nor only by the

^f Dan. x. 11. John, xxi. 20.

phrases of the Scripture, that expresses the errors and delusion of the heathen; but even by the very tenor and scope of this chapter itself,—for it setteth down the two great cozenings and deceivings of the world by the devil; the one, under heathenism before Christ bound him,—and the other, by antichristianism, when he was let loose again.

Secondly, By the angel's binding the devil in the text, is to be understood, Christ's overthrowing the power of the devil among the heathen (for I suppose it needless to prove, that the angel is Christ); his casting down those strong holds of Satan, ignorance, idolatry, and lying oracles, by the light and power of the gospel preached among the Gentiles; his bringing them home to the knowledge of the truth, and his curbing of Satan, that he should no more cozen the world with those delusions and heathenism as he had done.

Thirdly, This change of the heathens' condition, from the darkness of ignorance, to the knowledge of the truth,—from worshipping of idols, to the worshipping of the living God,—from seeking after lying oracles, to the studying of the Holy Scriptures,—from the power of Satan, to the glorious kingdom of the Lord's dear Son: this change, I say, out of that condition so sad, and that condition in which they had lain above two thousand years, was as their changing from death to life, and, as it were, a resurrection from the dead. And so it is called in the six-and-twentieth of Isaiah, and the nineteenth verse, and most expressly by our Saviour, in John v. 24, 25. And this is that 'first resurrection,' that is spoken of in this prophecy, in the fifth and sixth verses: and when the Jews shall be called, which now lie in a condition much like to the old heathens, that shall be as another resurrection; for so it is also called, Rom. xi. 15.

Fourthly, If I should make a chronology of these thousand years, I should date the resurrection of the Gentiles, and their calling in, and Christ's setting up his kingdom among them, from the destruction of Jerusalem, from which time also John dateth his Revelation: for although the gospel were preached to the heathen abundantly before Jerusalem were destroyed, and almost all the world was brought in, to the knowledge of the gospel, and obedience of the faith, before that time; yet is the date of these things more especially from that, because that then Judaism was wholly ceased, and Christianity only set up,—the old people of the

Lord cut off, and the Gentiles chosen and taken into their stead. And hence it is, that so great things are spoken of the day of Jerusalem's destruction in the Scripture; as that is called, 'the great, and terrible, and notable, day of the Lord,' Joel ii. 31, Acts ii. 20, as if it were the day of judgment, and the dissolution of the old world: and our Saviour discourseth it, and the end of the world, so mixedly together, that you cannot know them asunder, they are so like, Matt. xxiv.

And to this purpose is the Masoretic note upon the first of Genesis, and the second verse, of good use, which telleth us, that the phrase "Haarets tohu Vabohu," "The earth was without form, and void," is never used again in Scripture but once; and that is in Jer. iv. 23, where the prophet is speaking of Jerusalem's destruction, as if then the world were ended, and returned to its chaos again: for here it was that the old world of Mosaic rites, the old heavens, and the old earth, of the Jewish church and state, ended and came to ruin; and hence it was that the "new heavens and the new earth," the new world, the new Jerusalem, the new state of the world, and the new church of the gospel, began,—and then it is no wonder if this be called "the first resurrection:" here properly began that which, in Scripture, is so renowned, and called "the kingdom of heaven;" that is, Christ's kingdom in the gospel set up among the Gentiles, when the earthly kingdom of rites and ceremonies among the Jews, the kingdom of hell in ignorance and idolatry among the Gentiles, was now finished, and the kingdom everlasting of righteousness set up. And at this time it is that the thrones are said to be set up in Dan. vii, and in the fourth verse of this chapter, and, as our Saviour expresseth it, 'the apostles sitting on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;' that is, the apostolic doctrine, judging and condemning that unbelieving nation, and showing their rejection to be most just, because of their unbelief. This period of time, thus observed and taken notice of, would help to facilitate and clear many things in Scripture, which, for want of observing this, do fall under misprision and misinterpretation, as instance in that in Acts ii. 17; "It shall come to pass in the last days," &c. Conceits are taken up by divers in our times upon this place, as if visions and prophetic gifts, and I know not what, should be poured

upon men towards the end of the world; misconstruing the phrase of 'the last days,' to mean the latter end of the world; whereas it meaneth the last days of the Jews' world or state,—and misconceiving the term, "the great and terrible day of the Lord," to mean the day of judgment; whereas it meaneth nothing else but the day of Jerusalem's destruction. Were I, then, to chronicle these thousand years in the text, I should begin them from this date; but I shall not be punctual to determine that at this time. Begin them whether you will,—either there, when the Gentiles only began to be the church,—or begin them when first the gospel came among the Gentiles, either by Peter to Cornelius, or by Paul to the western parts of the world (for the publishing of the gospel to the heathen was the binding the devil, that he 'should no more deceive the nations'),—begin at whether date you will, it is easy to cast where the thousand years end, according to your choice of their beginning.

Fifthly; From either beginning, the end of them will fall in the very pitch of the kingdom of antichrist, as I may so call it, when now the world began to be in deepest darkness again, and to become heathenish anew, and then is Satan in justice loosed again, and deceiveth the nations afresh by antichrist; and, for a season, the world becomes no better than the old heathen's, for ignorance and idolatry.

Sixthly; In this thousand years' space, persecution haunted the church in a most miserable extremity, partly by the heathen emperors, partly by antichrist, when he appeared, and many thousands were put to death for the witness of 'Jesus, and for the word of God, and which neither worshipped the beast' of the empire, 'nor his image,' antichrist, when he was risen up; and these, though they were miserably tortured and slaughtered in regard of the body, yet their souls reigned with Christ, and were in happiness. And the evangelist, in the fourth verse, speaketh but in the tenor that Daniel doth in his twelfth chapter and second verse; where, treating of the miserable afflictions to be caused by Antiochus, he comforteth those that should fall under them, with assurance of the resurrection and eternal felicity. So the Apocalyptic here, being to discourse of the persecution that should befall by Rome, first heathenish, and then papal, he solaceth and encourageth all those that should suffer it, with this assurance,—that, though their bodies

should be destroyed, yet their souls should reign with Christ: and as for the others, that worshipped the beast and his image, they never obtained the first resurrection, of recovering out of their heathenish and blind estate, into the embracing of the light, but they continued dead in ignorance and error, till even after these thousand years, and then the world slipped into the darkness and delusions of antichrist, as into heathenism again. And so I have given you the sense of this place; and, as I conceive, the very sense of the Holy Ghost: if I have been a little overlong in it, it is but according as the difficulty of the thing itself requires, and I hope you will pardon me.

Before I come to take up the words, I cannot but observe this to you, from what hath been spoken last,—namely, that error and deceivedness in the things of God, is a verier devil, and more dangerous, than open persecution. For the text accounts the devil bound, when he is tied up from ‘deceiving,’ though he be at liberty for ‘persecuting.’ I do but name this here; I shall have occasion to make use of it hereafter.

And now, in the text, you may observe two things; first, a description of Christ, and a description of the devil; and, secondly, a mastery of Christ over the devil.

The description of Christ, in the first verse,—a description of the devil, in the second,—and the mastery of Christ over the devil, in the conjunction of both.

I might observe many things out of the words in either verse, but I shall only take up that which both the verses conjoined do mainly and clearly hold out unto us; and that is,—

That, be the devil never so devilish, Christ hath power to overpower him.

It is worth your observation, that the text seemeth to be at strife with itself, whether to set out the devil in his devilishness, or Christ’s power over him, in the higher expressions; for as, on the one hand, it hath set out the devil in five of his attributes, if I may so call them, as that he is a dragon, a serpent, an old serpent, the devil, Satan; so, in as many terms, on the other hand, hath it set out Christ’s power and victory over him,—namely, that he ‘lays hold on him, binds him, casts him into the bottomless pit, shuts him up, seals him up’ for a thousand years,—as if it purposely in-

tended to proclaim this to us, which I cannot but repeat again,—that, be the devil never so devilish, Christ hath power to overpower him.

The truth of this doctrine was the very first thing that was held out in the world, after sin came into it: and as soon as the devil had showed his devilishness in the overthrow of Adam, the Lord proclaims the power of Christ to conquer the devil,—and that before ever any censure or sentence be passed upon Adam^d.

And this truth shall be one of the last things that shall be held out in the world, when the devil shall receive the reward of all his devilishness; when he, his angels, and his instruments, shall receive this sentence from him, “Go, ye cursed,” &c.

And as for the space betwixt these two periods, or from the beginning of the world to the end of it, the Scripture is so full of testimonies, and the world so full of experiences of Christ’s power and mastery over the devil, that it is needless to prove it,—the devil himself dare not deny it^e.

I shall confine my discourse upon this subject into these particulars:—

Namely, to show you how the power of Christ meets with the devil to master him; first, in the utmost evilness of his nature, as he is ‘a serpent;’ secondly, in the utmost vigour of his power, as he is ‘a dragon,’ the greatest of serpents; thirdly, in the utmost practice of his subtilty, for he is an ‘old serpent;’ and, fourthly, in the utmost exercise of his malice, for he is ‘a devil;’ and, lastly, in the utmost violence of his cruelty, for he is ‘Satan:’ the utmost of any of these, the utmost of all these, either in himself, or in his instruments or members, all the devils in hell, all the wicked on earth, Christ is too big for them; he can, he doth, master, quell, and conquer, them at his pleasure.

The first thing to be considered in the devil, to our purpose in hand, is the evilness of his nature; and that the text intimates unto us, when it calls him, ‘a serpent,’ a beast that carries poison within him, death comes from him, and a curse is upon him: we may say of his nature, as he is a devil, as the Scripture speaketh of the frame of man’s heart, as it was unframed by the devil, “he is wholly evil, only evil, and evil continually.”

^d Gen. iii. 15.

^e Matt. viii. 29.

There is a question among divines^f, whether there be a 'summum malum' as there is a 'summum bonum;' 'a chiefest evil,' in that sense that there is a chiefest good. They hold it negatively, and there is good reason for it; but, certainly, if any thing come near to the pitch of such a thing as a 'summum malum,' it is that evil one we have in hand.

For, first, Look upon him in his being evil,—he is absolutely so, he is intentionally so, he is irrecoverably so, he is maliciously so.

Secondly, Look upon him in causing evil, and he was the father of sin, the first cause of God's dishonour, the voluntary cause of his own ruin, the malicious cause of the ruin of mankind.

And, thirdly, Look upon him in his acting of evil; and he did it, at first, without a tempter, he doth it since as a tempter; he committed it then at the height of sin, he doth it now as a depth of sin and punishment.

I might enlarge myself in all these particulars; but I shall only recommend to you the consideration of these two things:—The perverseness of his will, incorrigible; and the desperateness of his condition, irrecoverable: and thus is he most truly and primarily that, which Jude speaketh of some of his children and members, "twice dead, to be plucked up by the roots^g." Man, though he fell into the hands of this thief, and was stripped, and beaten, and wounded^h, and undone by him, yet left he him but half dead: not in the sense that some would make of it, as if some power and moving to grace were in his nature, when he was fallen; but in a sense contrary to the desperate estate of the devil,—that man's will was curable, and his fall recoverable.

So was not the devil's, either the one or the other.

The devil is, in this, in a direct diameter or contrariety to the good angels, that stood; that, as they cannot sin, so can he do nothing else; and as they can will nothing but good, so can he will nothing but evil; and as they shall never fall, so shall he never recover.

First; The incorrigible perverseness of his will is intimated in these expressions of Scripture:—"There is no truth in him; and when he speaks a lie, he speaks of his ownⁱ." "And the devil sinneth from the beginning^j." And

^f Aquin. part. 1. quæst. 49. art. 3.
John, viii. 44.

^g Jude, ver. 12.

^h Luke, x. 30.

^j 1 John, iii. 8.

“ your adversary, the devil, walketh about seeking whom he may devour^k. ” And others of the like tenor, concluding to us, that the devil is in a continual notion and practice of sinning; and can do nothing else, because there is no truth or goodness in him, but he is “ spiritual wickedness ” itself, as he is called, Eph. vi. 12.

Now, this obduration of the devil’s will in evil, proceedeth not only from the justice of God, reserving him in such chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day, but from two cursed principles within himself.

First, Whereas the evils that men fix their affections upon, are chosen by them as appearing to them to have good in them,—as pleasures, profits, and the like, and so poor men are deluded by shadows: the devil, in his fall, chose evil, even under the notion of evil; he being of a knowledge that could not be deluded, and being in a state that could not be bettered.

And, secondly, Because he doth adhere unto the choice of that evil that he first made, and that not only in regard of the fixedness of an angel’s choice, which, as the schools tell us, cannot change his choice which he hath once made: “ quia apprehendit immobiliter per intellectum^l; ” but also in regard of that maliciousness that poisoned his first choice, and hath venommed his whole will, and cannot be wrought out of.

And thus is the devil incorrigible, in regard of his cursed will; and then it is no wonder, if he be irrecoverable, in regard of his cursed estate: for if any wicked one deserves that sad doom of “ He that will be filthy, let him be filthy, ” this wicked one deserves it, and it is laid upon him. It was once, indeed, the conceit of some, that the devils should, in time, repent and be saved; but the devils themselves are of another opinion, as it may be seen, Matt. viii. 29; for God and their own conscience have told them so^m; and the Scripture telleth us soⁿ.

Now, two reasons may be given of this, besides these two mentioned before,—God’s justice, and their own obduration: and these are, first, in regard of the heinousness of their sin, for it was against the Holy Ghost: and, secondly, in regard of the height of their happiness, for they were in ‘ termino viæ,’ at their journey’s end.

^k 1 Pet. v. 8.

^m James, ii. 19.

^l Aquin. part. 1. quæst. 64. art. 2.

ⁿ Jude, ver. 6.

First ; Not to trouble you with any large discourse what the sin against the Holy Ghost is,—if ever it were committed, no doubt it was committed in the first sin of the devil.

Secondly ; When Adam sinned, he was but setting forth on his journey towards heaven, and that eternity that God had appointed him unto : for his happiness in Paradise was not the utmost happiness that he must look after, but a happiness in heaven, whereof that in Paradise was but a type and pledge ; and so, poor man, he stumbled and fell at the very threshold, as he was setting out on his journey ; and God, out of pity, set him on his feet again,—or else mankind had never tasted of that infinite good, for which God created it.

But the devil, as soon as ever he was created, being created an angel of light, he was already in the utmost happiness he must ever attain unto ; he was in heaven ; he was in eternity ; already he was with God ; and, what would he, what could he, have more ? And, therefore, for him, ‘in portu impingere,’ to shipwreck himself when he was got into the haven,—for him to despise God, heaven, and eternity, when he now enjoyed it,—it hath made him utterly desperate, in regard of his condition, and never to be repaired or recovered.

And thus have you seen something of the devil’s nature and constitution ; and I have been the briefer in the treaty of it, because I would not keep your patience too long upon such a discourse : and yet have I taken up such a discourse, because I know it would be exceeding profitable, if it could but bring us to see the devil in his own colours indeed. For if to behold God in his essence, doth fill the will so full of divine contentment, as that (as the schools speak) it can never turn again from God to delight in sin ; then, certainly, on the contrary, to behold the devil in his colours and complexion, would so fill the will with the abhorring and detestation of him, that it would not readily turn again to the devil to forsake God : and, therefore, if I were to make a threefold wish, as Austin once did, I cannot tell what to wish for to more profit and advantage, than to know God as he is, the devil as he is, and ourselves what we are.

But to pursue what we are about:—

As you have seen the evilness of the devil’s nature, especially in these two particulars,—in the incorrigible fro-

wardness of his will, and the irrecoverable cursedness of his condition: so now, look how the power of Christ meets with him and overpowers him, for all this his crooked and cursed disposition. And this is considerable also in two particulars:—

First, In that though the will of the devil be thus desperately and precipitately bent upon evil, yet Christ doth so overpower him, as that he produceth good out of the devil's actions to his own people. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" much more, can any good thing come from the devil? "Can any bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" not one, but one: he that brought light out of darkness at the beginning; fire out of water, at the sacrifice of Elias; sight out of blind eyes, stopped up with clay;—the same can bring good out of evil; good to his people, even out of the wickedness of the devil, by that "mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things, even the devil, to himself."

I might be copious, in showing what good the Lord produceth out of the devil's temptations, practised by himself; what good, out of the devil's persecutions, practised by his instruments; even honey for Samson, out of the very carcass of the devouring lion; and meat for Elias, out of the mouth of the carrion-raven. I might show you, how Adam had a better condition, Job a better estate, Joshua the high-priest better clothes, gotten out even of the assaults of the devil. I might show you, what carefulness is wrought in the people of God, "what clearing of themselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what holy revenge," as the apostle speaks in another case^o,—and all this even from the very devil's temptations.

I might show you how the church hath been increased, the gospel propagated, God glorified, atheists converted, and the enemies confounded, even by the devil's persecution: but I need not to go far for examples and experiences in this kind: look at home, in these times and distractions, where the devil is so busy; and as we may sadly see him raging, and let loose in these doleful wars, so may we as visibly see Christ doing good to this poor kingdom, out of this his evil. For,

First, How many rotten hearts, and how many rotten

^o 2 Cor. vii. 11.

members, hath the devil,—or God, rather, out of the devil's activity,—discovered in this nation in these troubles, which, like a moth and corruption, were devouring a poor kingdom, and she knew not who hurt her. What juntas of hell have been found out, what plots discovered, what cabinets of letters detected, what actions described, what hearts anatomized! Popery, prerogative, protestations, plotters, prelates,—all come to light, and found desperate, and devilish! and all this done by the great business of the devil, God overpowering him, and making him to prove a tell-tale of his own counsels, and, as it were, a false brother to his own hell and fraternity.

Secondly; How have these troubles beaten men and the kingdom out of their fooleries and superstitions, their trumperies and ceremonies, customs and traditions! which how hard it would have been to have got off from them, if they had not been thus brayed in this mortar, the great tenaciousness of them with divers, even in this mortar, is evidence sufficient: this dross would never have been got away, if it had not passed such a furnace; and our Israel would never have shaken hands with Egyptian idolatry, if it had not been beaten out of it by Egyptian affliction. So that let me take up the manner of speech of our Saviour, with some inversion: "O England! England! Satan hath desired to winnow thee as wheat, and he hath winnowed away a world of his own chaff."

Thirdly; How many profane and ungodly wretches hath this war cut off, Papists, atheists, epicures, devils incarnate, that would not only have lain in the way, as so much rubbish to hinder the work of the temple, but that would have proved Sanballats, Tobiahs, Geshems, and such Samaritans, utterly to oppose it with all their might! It is a sad thing to see so many of Israel perish in the matter of Baal-peor; yet there is this comfort in it,—that the entering into the land of promise will be the speedier, when these untowardly and ungracious ones are taken away.

Fourthly; How many prayers and petitions at the throne of grace hath he pressed out in these extremities! the fool making a whip for his own back; for so prayer is styled, 'flagellum diabolo;' and helping forward his own destruction.

And thus all things, even the very evilness of the devil himself, work for the good of God's people; and he that

would have run Phereus through, cures his imposthume and kills him not; and all through the overpowering power of Christ, who is able to subdue all things unto himself, and doth dispose all things for the good of his.

Secondly; Christ's mighty power meets with this evilness of the devil's nature and overpowers it, when he delivers men out of the very same evilness of nature, and works it out of them by the work of grace and renewing, and brings them to become new creatures: we have heard a sad story of the doleful nature and constitution of the devil; we may say each one to himself, as Nathan once to David, "by thy natural condition thou art the same:" as one blackamoor may see his complexion in another blackamoor's face, so may we our own nature in the devil's; he is our father by nature, and we as like him as we may look; and the two Sosias in the comedy, were not liker one to another, than we to him in our original temper. God at the first made us like himself; but our degeneration hath made us so like to Satan, that all the evilness, perverseness, cursedness, that we hear or read of the devil, is all our own: "and who shall deliver us from this body of death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord:" he hath a power that can pull and redeem us out of this estate; and surely this power is not small. And, therefore, the apostle, speaking of this work wrought upon a poor soul, calls it, "the exceeding greatness of his power to them that believeⁿ."

1. This is the next work of wonder and power to the work of the incarnation; for as, in that, God became man, so, in this, man becomes like God. 2. It is a work beyond that of the creation; for in that there was no resistance in the subject wrought upon,—in this, there is. 3. It is a change beyond all changes, for a devil to become a saint, a child of Satan to become the child of God,—and a man, from the very nature of the devil, to become partaker of the divine nature: and, 4. It is a greater work than casting out seven devils, or a legion of devils, for it casteth even all the devils of hell out of a man, for the nature of them all is in him. And then, how great is this power of Christ, that can thus change our devilish nature to become like his glorious nature, through his mighty working!

A second thing considerable in the devil, and to which

ⁿ Ephes. i. 19.

Christ's power is more diametrically opposite in overpowering him, is his power, even that great and wondrous power of the devil, for so I may call it,—that no bodily creature is able of itself to resist, and no man almost able to express or apprehend. He carrieth power in his name, he carrieth power in his nature, he carrieth power in his number, and he showeth power in works.

1. He carrieth power in his name, for he is called a 'dragon' here; 'a strong man armed,' Matt. xii. 29; 'the prince of the power of the air,' Ephes. ii. 2; 'the god of this world,' 2 Cor. iv. 4; 'principalities and powers,' Ephes. vi. 12.

2. He carrieth power in his nature, as being an angel, and so he is called even in his devilish estate, 1 Cor. vi. 3; "Know ye not that we shall judge the angels;" that is, the devils? And so should I understand that in 1 Cor. xi. 10, "A woman ought to have power on her head, because of the angels;" that is, a woman ought to have a covering on her head in the public meetings, lest the devils should tempt men with the exposal of her beauty: now, angels excel in strength^o, as being spirits, which are of an activity incomparably beyond bodily creatures. Nor hath the devil lost his power by his fall; since that was not so much any part of his holiness and happiness, as it was an essential faculty of his nature.

3. He carrieth power in his number; there being a numberless multitude of devils that fell together. Some divines of old have held, that they are equal in number to all the people of God, that shall be saved from the beginning of the world to the end of it,—and that God in eternity did decree to make up the number of fallen angels, by an equal number of elect men. Whether this be so or no,—and whether the air be full of devils, as others have conceived,—we will not examine; certain it is, that we read of a 'legion' in Mark v. 9; and doubtless it is, that the number of them is exceeding many.

4. And lastly; As he carries power in these respects, so he showeth power in his works and actings; insomuch, that his power hath been mistaken for the 'mighty power of God^p.'

I shall not need to insist upon it, to show you how he can,

^o Psal. ciii. 20.

^p Acts, viii. 10.

1. Hurry bodies up and down in the air^a.
2. Raise tempests^r.
3. Bring diseases both of body and mind^s.
4. Overthrow houses and buildings^t.
5. Break chains and bars^u.

It is our comfort, Christ hath a chain in the text will hold him; and, be his power never so great and wonderful in itself, and in the eyes of men, yet Christ hath power beyond him and over him, and this he exerciseth partly immediately by himself, partly mediately by his instruments.

1. Christ overpowereth the devil immediately by himself; for,

1. He suffereth him not to do his own will. This day is this truth fulfilled in our eyes, and in our persons; it is written even on these walls, as 'holiness' on the bells of the horses, Zech. xiv. 20; for, if the devil might do his own will, where had we been by this time, that are here now alive and safe before the Lord? If his power were as large as his malice, no flesh should be saved; but, for poor man's sake, that chain is shortened.

2. He maketh him to do his will: as the commander in the gospel,—he saith to one, 'Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to a third, Do this, and he doeth it;' and they cannot, they dare not, but obey him.

3. He can do nothing without his will: as,

1. Not walk farther than he gives him chain; for as, in the text, Christ hath a chain in his hand; so, in Jude, ver. 6, he hath the devil in a chain, and he cannot go an inch farther than he gives him liberty.

2. He can tempt no man without his permission; as in the case of Job, Job i. 2; of Ahab, 1 Kings xxii. 21, 22; no, not enter into the herd of swine without license, Matt. viii. 31.

3. He cannot recover himself out of his desperate condition, into which he is fallen.

4. He can as little recover his servants and agents, from any misery, into which they fall.

5. He cannot take off any plague, that the Lord layeth on.

6. He cannot force any man's will to evil; for, if the devil

^a Matt. iv. 5. Luke, viii. 29. 33.

^r Job, i. 16. 19.

^s Luke, xiii. 16, and Luke, ix. 37, compared with Matt. xvii. 14.

^t Job, i. 19.

^u Mark, v. 4, &c.

could carry the will whither himself would, he would carry all flesh to hell.

These particulars I might enlarge, to show the weakness of the devil, for all his great power, and Christ's power over him infinitely greater; but that may best be seen, by that power of Christ over the devil, which he showeth in, and by, his servants over him. As,

1. Christ's power in a poor believer, a spectacle for men and angels to look upon, and to wonder at: that a poor lump of clay, a worm, a moth, a nothing, yet drawing power by faith out of the everlasting fountain, should conquer him that can remove mountains; tread under foot the great dragon, and, through Christ, be more than a conqueror over him; and this we see by constant experience.

2. Christ's power, which he hath committed to ministers and magistrates; the two hands of Christ, whereby he visibly conquers the devil in the sight of men; the Jonathan and his armour-bearer; the priests with trumpets, and the gathering host, that, one after another, destroy these Philistines, and that both together help to lay the walls of the city of hell flat. Upon this object do I specially look in the exercise of these two offices; that they have not to fight against flesh and blood, 'but against principalities and powers.' And this consideration is some satisfaction to me, and helpeth to settle me about that matter which is now so much controverted; namely, about church-power: for to me it seemeth, the acting of these two offices to be thus:—the ministry to cast the devil out, where it may be done, and the magistrate to bind the devil, where he cannot be cast out: and '*ubi desinit philosophus, ibi incipit medicus*;' where the power of the one ceaseth, the other taketh at it, and finisheth the work. The ministry, by the preaching of the word, and by prayer, striveth to cast the devil out; and, if it do it, well;—but, if it cannot do it, it can go no farther; and then the magistracy cometh in, and bindeth him, that he trouble not others, though the ministry cannot cast him out from vexing the party himself. It is needless to show how Christ overpowereth the devil by both these; the matter is so apparent and conspicuous, I shall not need to go about to show it: it is enough to say, that the ministry of the gospel overthrew the idolatry of the heathen, and that the magistracy can hang a witch. And so have we done with a second

particular, the text hinteth unto us,—the devil's power, and Christ's overpowering it.

I should now take up the other considerations concerning the devil, that the text holdeth out: and, first, I might show his subtilty from that title that it giveth him, 'an old serpent;' 'a serpent,' the craftiest of all beasts'; and an old serpent of five thousand five hundred and seventy-three years' continuance and experience, within one month, or thereabouts.

I might have showed, how, in all this time,

1. He hath observed the course of nature; 2. The course of God's providence; and, 3. The temper of men; and hath reaped policy and experience from all these. How,

1. He playeth God's ape, in having his miracles and oracles as God hath his, and how he imitates his works.

2. Can transform himself into an angel of light; as he did to Eve, who took him for a good angel.

3. Baiteth his hooks with the good things of God, as with show of religion, with God's mercy and patience, to entice to presumption, &c.

4. Changeth his temptations as occasions change, as he did by Christ: one while, tempting him to a great work of power, to turn stones into bread; and another while, to a work of the greatest weakness, to worship the devil.

5. Deceiveth men with kids' flesh, instead of venison, and fixeth them on the creature, instead of the Creator.

6. Kills men with love of themselves, as the ape doth her young ones with embraces.

I might also have showed the subtilty and policy that he exerciseth *by* men, as well as he doth *to* men; and here might I take up the master-pieces of hellish policies practised by our enemies in these times.

And I might show how Christ overpowereth the devil, in regard of this his subtilty, in,

1. Giving strength to his people, to overcome his temptations.

2. In discovering his plots.

3. In defeating them.

4. In bringing them on his and his instruments' own heads.

Secondly, I might likewise have showed some glimpse

of the malice of the devil, as he is named in the text, 'Satan,' or an enemy.

As, 1. That he fell through malice to man; and this the most proper cause of his fall, though pride were mingled.

2. That he continueth in the same malice, by which he fell, and cannot do otherwise.

3. That it hath no bounds either in regard of himself, or of the object, but he is ever malicious, and malicious to all extremity; and that both against God, and against all men, and against all men alike,—though, in regard of external persecution, he sheweth some difference.

I might show withal, how Christ overpowereth him in regard of this maliciousness:

1. By bounding the execution of his malice, though his malice itself be not bounded.

2. By loading him with the greatest condemnation, even hatched and generated by his own malice.

And, lastly, we might have considered the cruelty of the devil, as he is a 'devil:' as,

1. That he is cruel even to himself, that he may mischief others; and brings the more condemnation upon his own head, by bringing men into condemnation.

2. That his cruelty is his only comfort, and that he hath no solace at all for his own destruction, but merely this cursed one, to bring men into the same case with him.

But Christ overpowereth his cruelty:

1. By the saints' patience.

2. By his providence.

All these things would require a large discourse to illustrate and comment upon them, but in regard of the time, they must be passed over: I shall now only crave leave to have a word or two of application of what hath been spoken, and so have I done.

This shows us where to get strength against the devil's temptations, or his instruments.

And, answerably, it may comfort every poor soul, that lieth under the violence of the one or the other.

And, thirdly, It may set us a-work, to labour for a great faith, since there is so great a power to fix it upon. "I am God all-sufficient (saith God to Abraham), walk before me, and be thou perfect^w." 'Be perfect;' that is, in this doc-

trine of my all-sufficiency, or all-powerfulness (for so the word means, and not that perfection that some dream of, as if Abraham kept the whole law): and then faith will gather strength and extent, because the power upon which it anchoreth, is omnipotent. But these things I do but touch.

Bless God for the experience of this truth, in our own particular preservation, and in the general preservation of the kingdom; and truly this is gloriously and graciously verified before our eyes at all times, in regard of the former,—and in these times, in regard of the latter.

For, first, If we consider the power of the devil, and the weakness of ourselves, and yet our preservation in both these circumstances, we have great cause to admire and adore that power, that doth preserve us. The safety of the three princes of Judah in the furnace, and of Daniel in the lions' den, and Jonah in the whale's belly, is hardly a greater wonder, than is our constant and continued preservation: so many devils to be hovering about us, as is their number,—so much power to be in them, as there is in them, both in regard of their number and their nature,—so much malice to be in their spirit, and so much cruelty in their acting, as there is; and yet we preserved in the midst of all this,—I want words to express the mercy; let us never want hearts to observe that power that doth preserve us. The devil can remove mountains, overthrow towers, rend rocks, tear up trees, do almost any thing, and yet our poor lump of dust is preserved: acknowledge the power, be thankful for the mercy.

And, secondly, In regard of the kingdom. Let us but turn aside, and see this great wonder, how it comes to pass, that this bush, that hath burnt so long, is not yet consumed: that this poor carcass of a nation, like that of the prophet, though it be even killed by this lion, yet is it not quite torn to pieces: that the fury, and policy, and mischievousness, of Satan, hath hurried it to the very precipice of confusion, as Christ to the pinnacle of the temple, and yet it is not thrown down into it: certainly, it is no strength nor power of our own, that doth preserve it,—for who is able to resist the violence of this enemy? but it is the great power of our dear Saviour, which I leave to your own thoughts, for I do but touch here neither.

But, lastly, and where I desire to stay a little: If Christ

be thus able to overpower the devil, and to master him at pleasure, then how is all this befallen us, that is befallen us, through the fury of the devil, and how doth it thus continue on us? As it is worthy our considerations, that we are so happily preserved by the power of Christ, that we are gone no farther in our misery,—so is it seriously to be thought upon, how it comes to pass, that his power hath suffered us to go so far as we have done, and to continue so long in it as we do.

Surely his hand is not shortened, that it cannot save,—nor his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but it is something that has separated betwixt us and our Saviour, and that makes him to stand as a stranger that looketh on, and works not for us, whilst the power and fury of the devil doth thus tread upon us.

It is easy to answer, that our sins have done it; and methinks God hath dealt with England, much like as he did with Pharaoh and the Egyptians in the Book of Exodus; when admonition upon admonition was given to them, and exhortation upon exhortation was pressed upon them, to hearken to God, and to let Israel go, and they would not do it, then God lets the devil loose among them in visible shapes, as they sat in the three days' darkness, to terrify and perplex them, as it is apparent by Exod. x, and Psal. lxxviii. 49, compared together. In the very like manner is it now with us: the Lord hath long been treating with this nation for her conversion, by precept upon precept, line upon line; by exhortation, admonition, mercies, judgments, all things: what could have been done more, than hath been done to England? But when still we are as unreformed and unconverted as ever, and when nothing that the Lord hath done to us will amend us; the Lord hath now at last turned Satan loose among us, with all his power, and all his fury: our sins have, as it were, broken the chains, and now he rageth without restraint, as never did he more in any nation. But this is not all I have to say.

It is most undoubted, indeed, that our former sins have brought us, and our present sins continue us, under this rage and insultations of Satan, that we now feel in all these miseries that lie upon us: but if I may freely speak mine own thoughts, I do verily believe that a main reason, why the devil is no more bound among us, is, because he is not

bound; my meaning is this: that God hath put into our own hands, exceeding much towards the binding of the devils, that do undo us, and we do not do it. It is in our own power to curb and quell the devil, that forageth and ruineth us, and we curb him not;—and then it is no wonder, nay, it is but justice, if he worry us, if he destroy us.

I will not speak of that devil that spoils all before him, the fury of our enemies, nor will I examine whether it may be restrained any more than it is;—your Wisdoms best know what you have to do in that particular.

But it is not the enemy only, that hath done us this displeasure that we feel, for then we could better have borne it, or hid ourselves from him, but it is some of our own party, some of our friends, of our familiars, with whom we have taken counsel together, and have gone with them to the house of God as friends, which do prove devils to us, or at least raise up devils among us, that ruin and undo us, that help on our sorrows, augment our miseries, bind on those plagues that the desert of our sins hath brought upon us. Our own quarters are become as the land of the Gadarenes, where two possessed parties, as I may so say, or rather two possessing devils, are so exceeding fierce, that none may pass by them, none can be quiet near them. And these two are, injustice in oppression, and erroneousness in opinion.

These are they that lose you friends, procure you enemies, and keep off neutrals,—that undo at home, and exasperate abroad,—that lose you more hearts than all your armies can subdue persons, and do more mischief to your holy and honourable cause, than all the other devils of hell can do, than all your enemies on earth have done. Our sad case at this time, is like the case of the four lepers under the walls of Samaria, in the Book of Kings; if they went into the city, they went upon famine; if they went from the city, they went upon the enemy: if we go to the enemy's quarters, there the devil of their cruelty devours us; if we abide among our own, one or other of these devils is ready to destroy us; so that as it was with them of old, it is with us at this day, “Abroad the sword devoureth, and at home is death.”

First, ‘We looked for justice, but behold, a cry’ (for give me leave to use the words of the prophet, and to speak of

bitter things in the bitterness of my spirit); the people of your own party expected judgment, equity, and comfort, from your sitting, and from your counsels; and they concluded with themselves, much like as Micah did, in another case,—‘Now, will it be well with us, now we have such a parliament to take care for us, to defend us, and to advise in our behalf:’ but, behold, instead of their expectation, injuries, oppressions, wrongs, injustice, violence, and such complainings and cryings out, in all quarters and parts even of your own party, that “let it not be told in Gath, nor published in the streets of Ascalon, lest the uncircumcised triumph, and exult over us in it.”

Mistake me not; it is far from me to charge your Honourable Court with any such thing; for I may say in this, as he and she did in another case^d, “My lord David knows it not;” but it is too many that act under you that cause this complaining, and that do this mischief; yet I cannot but say withal, that the injustice will become yours, if it be not remedied.

Now, O, that England’s grief, in this particular, were thoroughly weighed, and her calamity and complaints were laid in the balances together! Oh! that the cries of all the oppressed, in this kind, might meet here this day together in your ears, as we desire our cries and prayers might meet this day, in the ears of the Lord! what sad complainings, lamentings, grievings, and cryings out, would come almost from all parts and places in your own quarters! I will not take upon me to particularize in any; only, might I have but the quarter of that time and patience at your bar, that I have here, and but some preparation for it, as I had for this exercise, to do the message of mine own country, as I now do the message of the Lord,—I doubt I could tell you so sad a story, as would make your ears to tingle.

It is well observed by divines, that though God, for man’s redemption, could have conquered the devil by power, yet did he rather choose to do it by justice. He that spake the word, and brought light out of darkness, and the world out of nothing, could, by the same powerful word, have commanded mankind out of the jaws of the devil, and it had been effected: but his wisdom rather chose, that his own Son should take flesh, perform the law, and suffer death;

^d 1 Kings, i. 11. 18.

and so that the devil should be conquered by very justice; and not only his power quelled, but his mouth stopped.

This is the way for you to conquer, and no way like it: a little execution of justice is of more victoriousness than a great deal of military preparation: the stoning of one Achan doth more good towards the taking of Ai, than three thousand trained men could do.

By this way must you either quell and conquer this devil of injuriousness and oppression, or he will spoil your cause, he will overthrow your armies: and you cannot get so much ground abroad, as this will lose you ground at home, if it be not prevented.

I do most humbly recommend it to your most serious thoughts, and conclude this matter in the phrase of the prophet: "Do judgment and justice, judge the cause of the poor and needy, of the wronged and oppressed; and then may you eat, and drink, and prosper, and it will be well with you, and with your cause^e."

But, secondly, there is yet a second devil that undoes us, and worse, if worse may be; a white devil, that changeth himself into an angel of light, and so destroyeth the more, by how much he is suspected the less,—and that is, erroneousness in opinion; too common, too violent, among us at this day.

I told you, erewhile, that 'error and deceivedness in the things of God, is a verier devil, and more dangerous, than open persecution,' and here I cannot but take it up again; and I may give you some arguments to prove it: as,

1. I may use the style of our Saviour, "Fear not that devil that can kill the body, but when he hath done that, can do no more; but fear that devil, that can cast both soul and body into hell:" persecution can only destroy the body, but error destroys both body and soul.

2. I believe that persecution never destroyed a church, since the world stood; I am sure, errors have done divers: nay, I question whether corruption in manners can nullify the being of a church,—I am sure, corruption in doctrine hath done.

The seven churches of Asia, though some of them were exceedingly corrupt in point of conversation, and so corrupt that they had left and lost their first love, yet are they

^e Jer. xxii. 15.

all golden candlesticks, because, for the general, they retained the purity of doctrine.

The open persecution of our enemies, hath not, nor cannot do, that destruction and mischief to us, that errors do, and have done, among us; and my heart doth never sink so much in fear of our cause, as when I consider the growth of these in the midst of us,—for these threaten ruin to the very being of the church and of religion.

How sad and doleful a thing is it to consider,—and, for God's sake, take it seriously to heart,—that so glorious a church as this was, but a while ago, should now be so overgrown with these cursed weeds as it is, and is more and more every day, as is no reformed church under heaven. That God should be so blasphemed, his truth so polluted, the moral law so despised, repentance and begging pardon for sin so pleaded against, the immortality of the soul written against, duty cried down, and I know not what so cried up, as is in the erroneous opinions that are among us,—what a misery is this in the midst of our other miseries!

A canker, a gangrene, hath seized upon the land; and devours insensibly, but it devours desperately and devilishly: and “Aut tu illum, aut ille te,” either bind this devil, or this devil will have all in his power and kingdom of darkness, before we are aware. How he gets ground, and grows, and devours, and destroys,—who is there that sees not? And, for Sion's sake, who can hold his peace? Souls lie a-bleeding by this, as well as bodies by the enemy; the church is undone by this, as the land by them; this spoils our truth, as they do our peace; and, when these are gone, whither shall we go?

I shall not take upon me to be your director or instructor for the manner or means of stopping of this mischief, that it grow no farther, and for the suppressing of that growth which it hath already made; it is above my skill; your wisdom will best contrive that; but I shall humbly crave leave to be your remembrancer of something, that may tend unto it:—

1. There is great talk of, and pleading for, ‘liberty of conscience;’ for men to do in matters of religion, as Israel did in the Book of Judges,—‘whatsoever seemeth good in their own eyes;’ and how that proved there, there are sad

stories that relate. I shall not go about to determine the question, whether the conscience may be bound or not; though, for mine own satisfaction, I am resolved it may; and do hold it a truer point in divinity, that ‘errans conscientia liganda,’ than ‘ligat;’ but, certainly, the devil, in the conscience, may be, nay, he must be, bound, or else you act not according to that vigour, that Christ hath put into your hands; nor according to that exactness, that Christ requireth at your hands. It is true, indeed, which is so much talked of, that Christ alone must reign in the conscience; but it is as true also, that he doth so by the power that he hath put into the hands of the magistrate, as well as by his word and Spirit.

2. I hope you will find some time, among your serious employments, to think of a review and survey of the translation of the Bible; certainly, that might be a work which might very well befit a reformation, and which would very much redound to your honour.

It was the course of Nehemiah, when he was reforming, that he caused not the law only to be read, and the sense given, but also caused the people “to understand the reading^e.” And, certainly, it would not be the least advantage that you might do to the three nations (if not the greatest), if they be your care, and means might come to understand the proper and genuine reading of the Scripture, by an exact, vigorous, and lively, translation.

I hope (I say it again), you will find some time, to set afoot so needful a work: and, now you are about the purging of the temple, you will look into the oracle, if there be any thing amiss there, and remove it.

3. I shall not beg of you to cherish learning, for that hath no enemy but ignorant ones,—nor shall I beg that you would cherish a learned ministry, for that may challenge cherishing: but, I beseech you, take care that none intrude upon the ministry, or to preach the word, that have not a calling to it, and some competent ability for it.

This is a main well-head, from whence flow all the errors that are among us, when mechanics, unlettered and ignorant men, will take upon them to be preachers, and to instruct others, when they need teaching themselves; and this, if it be not stopped, will overflow all with a puddle of

^e Neh. viii. 8.

errors and heresy : you have made good orders for the stopping and preventing of this ; but execution is all.

4. I beseech you, hasten the settling of the church : these weeds grow, while government groweth not. I rejoice to see what you have done in platforming classes and presbyteries ; and I verily and cordially believe, it is according to the pattern in the mount.

The Lord speed and prosper you in working up the furniture for this fabric. Especially, he be your director in the two great things that are now under your agitation,—church-power, and suspension from the sacrament. I am most unable to hold out to you any thing, that may direct you in matters of such weight : and if my judgment were any thing, yet should I be sparing to show it, because I must confess, that, about these matters, I differ in judgment from the generality of divines,—and I hold it not any happiness to be singular in opinion, nor do I hold these to be times to broach differences. I shall ever follow you with my desires and prayers, and write the success of the good hand of our God upon you.

FUNERAL SERMON^a

UPON

SIR ROWLAND COTTON,

LUKE, IX. 30, 31.

And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias :

Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

SIT down and hearken, my beloved ; but, withal, sit down and wonder,—for the text deserves both : Moses and Elias are here come from the dead, to make a funeral sermon. Who can but hearken ? But, withal, they make it upon the decease of Christ, who is yet alive, and talketh with them : who can but wonder ? That sermon, sure, is worth hearkening to, where Christ vouchsafes to be an auditor ; but, withal, the matter, sure, is worth wondering, that not one word of such a sermon is now extant. Oh, for this one wish, instead of St. Austin's three,—that we might either have come to this sermon, or that this sermon might have come to us ! But, we know not what to ask : nine of the disciples were denied it,—and do we dream of access ? And the three that obtained it are asleep, and we think we could have done I know not what. Crumbs from this table may well serve our turns ; and, indeed, we may almost wonder ourselves besides ourselves, even at this our distance. Sit down then, again, and wonder, my beloved,—sit down and wonder.

Moses's body was erewhile in the grave, but now it is in glory ;—Christ's body is now in glory, but shall be ere long in the grave :—Elias's body and soul were erewhile in heaven, but are now on earth :—Christ's body and soul are now upon earth, but shall be ere long in heaven :—Christ is now in glory between the two greatest prophets, but ere long shall be in infamy between two notorious thieves. Moses and Elias were, long ago, buried and translated by Christ,

^a This sermon is now printed, for the first time, from a manuscript in the British Museum.—Ed.

and yet Moses and Elias are here again telling Christ of his burial and translation. It was the decease of Christ, even before it was, that gave Moses and Elias life; so that Moses and Elias, even before it is, live again to tell Christ of his decease! "And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."

There are two mysteries that bear record in heaven, or concerning God, and show his incomprehensibleness and wisdom; and these are, the mystery of the trinity, and the mystery of the incarnation, or the "*Alius atque alius, non aliud atque aliud*^a;" the distinction of persons, but not the distinction of natures, in the divine essence: and the "*aliud atque aliud, non alius atque alius*;" or, the distinction of natures, but not the distinction of persons, in the Redeemer. The mystery of these truths can no one attain fully to know, till he attain salvation; but the truth of these mysteries must every one fully believe, that believes to be saved.

There are also two mysteries that bear record on earth, or concerning man, and show God's infinite power and mercy; and those are, the mystery of man's resurrection, and the mystery of his glorification^b; or, the reuniting of the body, once corrupted, incorruptible again to the soul, and the knitting of that corporeal substance of the body spiritually in glory to God. I may say, also, of those truths can no one attain fully to know, till he attain salvation; but the truth of these mysteries must every one fully believe, that believes to be saved.

Less than so great lessons as these, could not so great a matter as the transfiguration teach us; when Christ and glorified men talk together, and law, prophecy, and gospel, discourse each with other. Sit down then, again, and wonder, my beloved, to behold, in this one story, four such wonders. Intimation of the trinity, behold in the voice from heaven, "This is my Son^c."

Intimation of the incarnation, behold in Christ, now glorified, but shortly to suffer. Intimation of the resurrec-

^a Vincent. Lirin. Comment. lib. i. cap. 14.

^b Those four mysteries intimated in the story of man's creation, Gen. i. 26.

^c The Trinity: Ignat. Mart. in Ep. ad Antioch.

tion, behold in Moses, lately dead, but now living. Intimation of our glorification, behold in Moses and Elias both, “who appeared in glory, and spake of Christ’s decease, that he should accomplish at Jerusalem^e.”

When Moses is ready to depart from Israel, he comforts them with this prophecy, “A Prophet shall the Lord God raise unto thee of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken^f.” ‘A prophet;’ that is, a succession of prophets^g:—‘A prophet;’ that is, that great Prophet^h, who should conclude that succession, ‘and seal up vision and prophecyⁱ.’ And, when Moses died, the cloud of glory, which had overshadowed Israel, all the time that they were in the wilderness, did then depart at his departure.

How is fulfilled that, which was spoken of the prophet Moses! That God did ever send them a succession of prophets according to his word, here is Elias, the greatest of the succession, to justify: and that God hath now sent them that great Prophet, according to his word, to whom they must ‘hearken,’—the restoring of the cloud of glory, and a voice out of that cloud, do testify: “This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear him.”

If you regard time of life, Christ hath here testimony from heaven in the last year of his preaching, even as he had in the first^j. If you regard time of the year, all Moses’s body is now glorious upon a mount^k, much about that time of the year, when his face began to be so upon a mount^l. If you regard situation of place, Elias, in the utmost coasts of the land of Canaan, northward, is now to be found, who once, in the uttermost coasts of the land of Canaan, eastward, was taken away, and not to be found^m. As St. Austinⁿ, in another case, “O res gestas, sed propheticè gestas; in terra, sed cœlitus; homines sed divinitus:” ‘Those were things done, but mystically done; things done on earth, but heavenly things; done by men, but divinely.’ Now, what divine mystery can be wanting, when Moses, the great prophet of the Jews, Elias,—the great prophet of the Greeks,—and Christ, the great Lord of them both,—are met and discoursing?

^e Hilar. lib. 3. de Trin. August. de Hide ad Pet. Lumb. lib. 2. dist. 2. The Incarnation, Athanas. in Symb. The Resurrect. R. Monaken. Gen. Glorificat. Lumb. lib. 2. dist.

^f Deut. xviii. 15.

^g Acts, iii. 24.

^h John, i. 21.

ⁱ Dan. ix. 24.

^j So Tatian in Harmon. Evang. Ammonius holds otherwise falsely.

^k Vide Seder. Cam.

^l Exod. xxxiv.

^m 2 Kings, ii.

ⁿ Lib. 15. de Civ. Dei, c. 37.

“ And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory,” &c.

For our orderly proceeding about this divine discourse, these three disciples, here present, have set us a copy what to do : as, first, with them to consider, who those be that be here conferring, that you see in the first words ;—“ And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias,” &c.

Secondly ; With them to hearken what the subject of their discourse is ; and that you have in the last words, “ They spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.” Yet have we forgotten these words, ‘ they appeared in glory ;’ even so their appearing in glory made the disciples to forget themselves°. But what need we to particularize of this, when the text is all glorious within ? and as a golden thread was twisted with every thread of Aaron’s breast-plate ; even so gloriousness goes along with every parcel of the text. Moses is glorious^p ; Elias is glorious^q ; Christ is glorious^r ; his death is glorious^s ; and yet, beloved, a greater glory of Moses, a greater glory of Elias, an extraordinary glory of Christ, and extraordinary glorious things of Christ’s death, are expressed here ; “ And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias,” &c.

What shall we first admire ? the attendance of these servants, who came from the dead to wait upon their Master, or the power of their Master, that fetched them thence ? otherwise they could not have come ? How can the Jews say that Christ is Elias, as his disciples told him not long ago they did, when Elias himself is fetched from heaven to Christ upon this mountain, to confess that a greater Prophet than Elias was there ? Or, how can the Jews, for shame, say, that Christ was a transgressor of the law of Moses, as they themselves told him oft he was,—when Moses himself is fetched out of his grave to Christ upon this mountain, to acknowledge that a greater lawgiver than Moses was there ? This is the reason why these two men, above all other, saith Victor Antiocheus^t.

But, behold, some greater mystery is here^u. Every prophet of Israel had a double Spirit of God, or, more properly,

° R. Sol. Jarchi emptily.

^p Exod. xxxiv.

^q 2 Kings, ii.

^r Psal. xlv.

^s Cant. iii. 11.

^t In Mark ix.

^u Joan. Hierosol. de just. monac. c. 23.

a double power of one and the same Spirit, prophesying and working of miracles. These both are given to Moses, the first prophet of the church of Israel, and successively to those that followed; but, with the gift, it was also given Moses to know, and so also those that followed, that this double power they had not from themselves, but from another; Moses's stammering tongue taught himself and them so much 'for prophecy,' and his leprous hand so much 'for miracles.' His two words נביא כמיני 'a prophet like unto me^v,' called upon them to look back still at himself^w; who, though he excelled in these two faculties above others, yet had not the power from himself, but from a greater than he,—and to look forward to that greater Prophet than he, who should express himself to have this double power, not from another, but from himself^x.

That expression is here apparent; and Christ proclaimed that great Prophet, whose inherent and independent power of prophecy is showed by the homage of the greatest prophets of Jews and Gentiles, Moses and Elias; and his inherent and independent power of miracles is showed, when he brings the one from heaven, and the other from the grave, to do this homage: but, behold, some other mystery is here still. Remember the law of Moses, saith Malachi (iv. 4); and, in the next verse, "Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet." To apply the words to my text, give me leave to invert them. Remember that Moses here is the law, and Elias the prophecy^y; and you have here an emblem of the Scriptures, which is, that "*lex atque omnis prophetarum chorus Christi prænотat passionem^z*," that the law, and all the glorious company of the prophets, foretell Christ's passion in their books; as, how Moses, the giver of the law, and Elias, the chief of the prophets, do speak to him mouth to mouth, "and talk of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."

Marcion, the heretic, did once maintain, that the Old Testament was given by one God, and the New by another; the Old, by a God of cruelty,—the New, by a God of mercy. Is it proper if I say, his ignorance was great, that begat so great malice? I am sure his malice was extreme, that be-

^v Deut. xviii.^w Vid. R. Menah. in loc.^x Vid. Baal Hassarim in Deut. xviii.^y Hilar. in Matt. xvii.^z Ramiquis in Mal. iv.

trayed so extreme ignorance. It is admirable (but that God, in his justice, when men will not embrace the truth, gives them to strong delusions, to believe a lie),—I say, it is admirable that a man should damn himself, for holding an opinion against so evident and facile a truth. As Lactantius^a, in another sense, “*Da mihi virum ;*” let him be an ignorant man, let him be a heretic, let him be a heathen man, nay, let him be a devil,—if he will but take the Bible and read, he himself shall evince his own conscience of this truth,—that both Testaments breathe from one Spirit; that both mainly aim at one thing; though the letter of the Old be different from the letter of the New, as death from life, yet, that the Spirit of both is the same, as there is a life under death; that the Old is the New under a cloud, and the New is the Old with sunshine; that not only upon this mount, but even throughout the Old Testament, Moses and Elias, law and prophecy, talk to Christ, “and speak of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.”

The Jews, in the Talmud, have this saying: “The whole law was given to Moses at Sinai, in six hundred and thirteen precepts. David, in the fifteenth Psalm, brings them all within the compass of eleven. Isaiah brings them to six, Isa. xxxiii. 15. Micah to three, Micah vi. 8. Isaiah again to two, Isa. lvi. Habakkuk to this one, “The just shall live by faith,” Hab. ii. 4. Behold and wonder, my beloved; though fewer stand upon the works of the law, and yet deny it to be a law of works, they deny the faith of our gospel, and yet confess the law to be a gospel of faith. They are as spiteful against the God of the New Testament, as Marcion was against the God of the Old,—yet confess the doctrine of the Old, to be the same that, we say, is the doctrine of the New; even Christ in a cloud in the one, and in glory in the other; Moses and Elias talking with Christ upon mount Horeb in the one, and Christ talking with Moses and Elias upon mount Tabor in the other, concerning ‘his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.’ This passion-sermon of Christ, made by Moses and Elias here, Christ himself makes the rehearsal of, Luke xxiv. 27: “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself.” I can hardly hold wishing, as before, O, that this rehearsal

^a Lib. 3. Instit.

might have come to us, or we come to this rehearsal! But we have already what we ask; for, as our Saviour in the parable^b, We have Moses and the prophets still, let us hear them; for, as St. Paul, concerning the blood of Abel, they even still, though in silence, yet do preach concerning Christ and 'his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.'

The body of the tabernacle of the Lord in the wilderness was tied together with seven ties, to make it sure, and to hold together, even as the body of Christ, or the church, is, in Eph. iv. 4—6: the main bond and strength of all was by the staff, that was carried in the thickness of the planks, even through them, from one end to another; and those four staves also, that were carried through divers rings fastened in the sides of the planks, from one end also to another. Even so in the tabernacle of Scripture, in which God dwelleth as in the other, the main thing, that runs along from one end to another, like those staves, is the story of Christ, borne along in divers rings of various passages:—what is the main thing carried in the golden ring of prophecy, but Christ? What in the golden rings of types, but Christ? What in the golden rings of precepts, but Christ? What in the golden rings of histories, but Christ? And what is the staff that is the heart and strength of all, and in all, but the glory of "his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem?" "Faciamus ergo hic unum tabernaculum." Let us, then, make here one tabernacle for Moses, Elias, and Christ, to sit down in awhile, and confer together; or, let us stay a little upon that discourse, which Moses and Elias, law and prophecy, make to Christ; and, like pure evangelists, preach the gospel of Jesus Christ concerning his incarnation, birth, life, doctrine, sufferings, passion, resurrection, and even all things that he was to accomplish elsewhere, and at Jerusalem.

Blame me not, if I be taken with this and with the disciple's cry, "Bonum est esse hic," it is good staying here; for, by this course of laying law and prophecy forward to the gospel, I see Moses and Elias in their glory; and by laying gospel backward to the law and prophecy, I see Christ in his glory:—and can I be blamed if I be taken?

And this was the delight of that blessed soul, which is now

^b Luke, xvi.

in glory; methinks I see how he is now ravished with beholding Moses, and Elias, and Christ, in glory,—indeed, face to face,—by measuring him by those raptures that I have seen him in, when he had seen those laid but face to face in Scripture-text. O, how his soul would bless me, when I presented him with such savoury meats as those, for those his soul loved!—O, how feelingly would he relish such confects as those, sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb! nay, how accurately and acutely was he himself able to run this course of discourse! How many hundred times have I heard him find the gospel in the law and the prophets; and pleasantly, for trial of me, ask, ‘Where find you such a passage of the gospel, in Moses or the prophets,’ himself being ready to supply where I scrupled!—but I forget his command. At his command I undertook this task, and, for his sake, have I chosen such a text, as leads to his own vein of study, that my last sermon for him might run in the same strain, in which those did that I used to make to him, not for his present delight, for he is now ignorant of us, but for my own; for methinks, when I am in this kind of discourse, I am discoursing with him:—but I forget his other command.

Moses’s law is the ground of all divinity; so was it to Israel, so must it be to us: the rest of the Old Testament was a divine exposition of Moses’s law; so was it to Israel, so must it be to us. The New Testament is a sweet commentary upon both; so should it be to us, and so in time shall it be to Israel. God, when he had left in writing as much as his divine wisdom knew to be necessary for Israel’s salvation under the law; and when the Holy Ghost (for his familiar expressions) ceased from Israel, and departed; when now they had neither vision nor prophecy to instruct them, till He should come who should seal vision and prophecy,—God, by his last prophet, sends them back to remember the law of Moses^c. The first letter in זכרו ‘zicru^d,’ ‘remember,’ is a great letter, and above ordinary size; either, as some say, to intimate to them the great cause they had to remember the law; or, as others, to call upon them to remember the five books of Moses, and the book of the prophets, and the book of Hagiographa, according to the great Zain’s numeral, which is seven. These were Israel’s evangelists, instructing them concerning Christ, and all things of Christian religion

^c Mal. iv. 4.

^d Vid. Buxt. Tiber.

necessary for their salvation. And all these were not only written for them, but also for us, upon whom the ends of the world are come; even as they, so must we, lay herein Moses and Elias, law and prophets, the groundwork of all our religion, and in Christ, or the gospel, finish it: in the law to make the seed-plot of all doctrines necessary to salvation; in the prophets, to water it,—and in the gospel, to gather the increase.

God himself hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what the Lord doth require of thee in the manner of reading of Scripture, even by his manner of writing it.

As Moses, or the law, begins, so the gospel ends; and as Elias, or prophecy, ends, so the gospel begins; ‘Atque in se solvitur,’ God rolling the Scripture even in itself, and showing us Moses, and Elias, and Christ, talking together on the outside of the tabernacle; much more do they within. With the creation of heaven and earth the law begins^d; and with the creation of a new heaven and a new earth, the gospel ends^e. With the garden of God, and a tree of life, the law begins^f; and with a better garden of God, and a better tree of life, the gospel ends^g. The first sin mentioned in the law, is Eve’s ‘adding to, and diminishing from,’ the commandment; she adds, when she saith of the forbidden tree, “We may not touch it;” she diminisheth, when she saith “lest we die;” and with this the law begins^h: the last sin mentioned in the gospel, is of ‘adding to, and diminishing from,’ the Scripture; adding to, in these words, “If any one shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book;” diminishing from, in these words, “If any one shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life;” and with this the gospel endsⁱ.

With the sending of Elias and his ‘converting of the hearts of the fathers to the children, and of the hearts of the children to their fathers,’ prophesying ends^j; with the coming of Elias, and his ‘converting the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,’ the gospel begins^k. The last thing threatened in the prophets against the rebellious Jews, is, “lest I come, and smite the earth with a curse^l;” and with this the prophesying of the

^d Gen. i.^e Rev. vi.^f Gen. ii.^g Rev. xxii.^h Gen. iii.ⁱ Rev. xxii. 19.^j Mal. iv. 6.^k Luke, i. 17.^l Mal. iv. 6.

Old Testament, by Malachi, ends. The first thing urged in the evangelists against the rebellious Jews, is, “who forewarned you to flee from the wrath to come^m?” and with this the preaching of the New Testament, by John Baptist, begins.

Thus God, even by his own method, hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what method the Lord requireth of thee in thy reading of the Scriptures; he brought Moses and Elias to talk to Christ in Scripture, even before Christ came; he set Moses, and Elias, and Christ, to talk together in person upon this mountain; and he hath left Christ to talk with Moses and Elias in Scripture again ever since, and “Quos Deus conjunxit, nemo separet;” and ‘those whom God hath thus joined together, let no man put asunder.’ As oft as thou takest the Scripture in hand to read, thou goest up into a mountain to see Christ in glory; if Moses and Elias talk not to him there, if thou seest him in glory, thou seest more than did his own disciples. Thou mayest hear them talk together if thou wilt; for God hath put them together. Do but sit still and hearken, and thou needest not to bemoan the loss of this sermon; for thou mayest still have Moses and Elias preaching concerning Christ and his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. These brief notes did I take from their sermon,—which take with thee, and compare with thine in thy meditations, and thou shalt still hear Moses and Elias speaking to Christ. First, Moses began to common-place concerning the doctrine of faith, and necessity of it, and that by faith only we were to obtain salvation; that eternal life came not by the merit of man, but of the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Here might we have heard the Jews murmur, ‘We have endured the burden and heat of the day, and laboured so long under the yoke of the law, and shall not the works thereof avail us?’ And Moses answered, ‘No; for by the works of the law shall no man be justified:’ and to this all the prophets gave their assent in these words, “Cursed be he that maketh flesh his arm.” Here Moses taught them, that it was impossible for them to keep the law, for they could not hear it; that he himself brake both the tables, and that they were to look for a new covenant, as the tables were renewed: to this all the prophets give their assent in these words, “All our righteousness is as a menstruous garment.”

^m Matt. iii. 7.

Then Moses proceeds, that his law was but as a school-master, to train them up for the covenant, and to bring them to it. That however it was given in positive terms, ‘Do this, and refuse this,’ it showed neither their power to keep it, nor its own power to make them perfect; but how far they were from perfection, and which was the way thither: here might you hear the book of the prophets assent and say, ‘Even so.’ When Naaman the Syrian begs liberty of his prince to go to the prophet Elisha, to be healed of his leprosy, the king sends him to the king of Israel to be healed,—that is, to be directed to the prophet, who might heal himⁿ.

Next Moses preaches at large, how his law draws each part one another, and every one draws to Christ; that the moral law teaches what is to be done, and withal that man cannot do it; for he sheweth that the holiest of their men, and the holiest of their services, received sanctity, not from themselves, but from other: so the priest was sanctified by his garments, and the sacrifices by the altar. This, then, putteth on to the ceremonial law, to look for some other, by and from which to be accepted; but that teacheth, that the whole earth is accursed, and by it no hopes to obtain a blessing; that men in the law of leprosy, are all unclean, though the leprosy be not on them; that angels in the tabernacle were silent spectators, and no actors in the work of reconciliation; that infinite justice, offended, requireth infinite satisfaction to be made; for this were, in a manner, infinite numbers of sacrifices: yea, what could be sufficient for such a thing?

From hence, then, are you turned over to the judicial law, to receive sentence, and that it gives to this sense, ‘Cursed is every one that abideth not in every of the words of this law to do them.’

‘ORATIO FUNEBRIS.’

That blessed soul, that is now with God, in the night of its departure, laid the burden of this present work upon me, in these words: “You are my old acquaintance; do me the last office of a friend; make my funeral sermon, but praise me not.” A hard task, fathers and brethren, is laid upon me; when I, who, of all men, this day, have the greatest cause to mourn for his loss, that is departed, should, of all men,

ⁿ 2 Kings, v. 6.

this day, be allowed the least liberty of mourning, because of this present work. And a strange task, fathers and brethren, is laid upon me, when I must make to you all a funeral sermon, and yet must tell to none of you, for whom it is made; for if I do but call him Sir ROWLAND COTTON, I commend him: it was not a time to say so then, but now, I dare say it over again. A hard task, fathers and brethren, is laid upon me, when I must have much cause of tears for his death, and yet not be allowed to weep; and such reason of remembrance of his life, and yet be denied to praise. I obey, blessed soul, I obey; but I am full, I cannot hold; dispense with me something, for I cannot hold: it is for your sake, worthy audience, that I must hold tears, lest they should hinder my speech; be pleased to give me liberty of speech, in recompense of my restrained tears; and it is for thy sake, blessed soul, that I must withhold commendation, lest I should break thy command; give me liberty of indignation against that command, in recompense of my restraint from thy commendation. “*Meus, tuus, noster, Christi,*” as Jerome of Nepotianus; so we of him, whose departure we now commemorate,—“my Sir Rowland Cotton, yours, the country’s, nay, Christ’s,” hath forsaken us; and, because Christ’s, therefore he hath forsaken us to go to him, whose he wholly was.

O that my head were waters, or rather words, for only that manner of mourning,—and my tongue a fountain of tears, for only that instrument of weeping,—is allowed me now; that I might weep day and night, not for him that is gone,—for he is gone where he always was, and where he would be,—but for myself, but for you, but for the country. It is not my ambition, but my sorrow, that I claim the first place, and to be first served, in this heavy dole of lamentation; for I have lost,—I cannot tell you what; my noble patron, my best friend, my father, my —: myself I should lose, if I should but begin to tell, what he was to me: why should I speak more? for should I speak myself away, I could never speak enough. O my father, my father! the chariot of my Israel, the horsemen thereof, how thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women! And, ‘is it nothing to you, O ye that sit by; behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.’ He it was that

first laid the foundation of my poor studies, and always watered them with his discourse and encouragement ; and now the Lord hath taken my master from my head. He it was, under whose branches I sheltered, when any storm was up ; and now my tree of defence is cut down : he it was that was my oracle, both for things of this life, and of a better ; and now my prophet is not any more : he it was that was all things to me that man could be, but now can be nothing to me but sorrow. And is this nothing to you, O all ye that sit by ; yes, the cup is gone among you also, and a great man is fallen in your Israel. Hath not the magistracy, hath not the gentry, hath not the country, lost such a man as was ——— ; but you must speak out the rest, for his command stops my mouth. You of the magistracy know, how he had wisdom in a high degree, as was his calling,—and, withal, care and conscience answerable to his wisdom, to discharge his calling ; and *you* may commend this rarity in him,—*I* dare not : you of the gentry know, that he was a prime flower in your garland, that he spake a true gentleman in all his actions, in his comportment, in his attendance, in his talk ; once for all, in his hospitality even to admiration, and you may, &c. ———

In your actions, remember, that you were once wife to Sir Rowland Cotton, but now must be himself. The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, be your consolation ; and the God of glory make you glorious here, and for ever.

A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE

THE NATIVES OF STAFFORDSHIRE,

AT

ST. MICHAEL'S, CORNHILL,

NOVEMBER 25, 1658.

JOHN, x. 22, 23.

And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.

And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch.

THE text is suitable to the occasion. Here is a feast, as well as yours; a feast in winter, as well as yours; and, as I shall show you anon, a feast on the five-and-twentieth day of November, as well as yours. If Christ will vouchsafe his presence at yours, as he did at this in the text,—the parallel will not be so pregnant, as it will be happy.

Of all the four evangelists, John is most punctual; nay, he only is punctual to give account of the festivals, that intercurrent between Christ's entrance into his public ministry at his baptism, and the time of his death; that renowned and signal space of time, of half a week of years, as they be called, Dan. ix. 27; or three years and a half, in which Christ performed his ministry, and wrought redemption. And this he doth, partly, that he might the more remarkably count out the time,—and partly, that he might show, how careful our Saviour was to observe those festivals.

He names you the four Passovers, that intervened.

The first Passover, after his baptism, in chap. ii; when he whipped buyers and sellers out of the temple.

The second in chap. v; when he healed the long-diseased man at Bethesda.

The third in chap. vi. 4 ; a little before which he fed five thousand men miraculously.

The fourth and last in chap. xviii ; at which he suffered.

He gives you also account of his being at the feast of tabernacles, chap. vii ; and of his being at the feast of dedication, in the words that I have read.

To the expounding of which, the very way that I must go, cannot but mind me to observe this to you :—

That human learning is exceeding useful, nay, exceeding needful, to the expounding of Scripture.

The text gives the rise of this observation, and it gives the proof of it. Here is the mention of the feast of dedication, and not one tittle else in all the Scripture concerning it. And so there is the bare mention of Solomon's porch ; and, indeed, it is mentioned once again, in Acts iii. 11 ; but neither here nor there any more than the bare name. Certainly, the Holy Ghost would never have mentioned these things, if he would not have had us to have sought to know what they meant. But how should we know them ? The Scripture gives not one spark of light to find them out ; but human learning holds out a clear light of discovery.

Would you know, what this feast of ' dedication ' was ? Upon what occasion instituted ? How celebrated ? At what time of winter it occurred ? The Scripture speaks not one word of all these ; but human authors, the Talmud, Maimonides, Josephus, the First Book of Maccabees, tell you all fully.

And would you know what ' Solomon's porch ' was, and where it was, and in what part of the temple it was ? In Scripture you can never find it ; but consult human learning and writers, and they will tell you it was a cloister-walk, on the east bound of the utmost court of the temple ; and they will tell you the very space and fashion of it.

Here is a text fallen into our hands occasionally (a thousand others of the like nature might be produced) ; let any of those that deny human learning to be needful in handling of divinity, but expound me this text without the help of human learning, and I shall then think there is something in their opinion.

Two things lead them into this mistake :—1. Because they conceive the New Testament (which part of the Bible Christians have most to deal withal) is so easy of itself,

that it needs no pains or study to the expounding of it. 2. And the less, Because, say they, the Spirit reveals it to the saints of God, and so they are taught of God, and can teach others.

Give me leave, partly for our settlement in the truth about this point, and partly for the stopping the mouths of such gainsayers, out of many things that might be spoken, to commend these four to you:—

1. *That, in the time when prophecy flourished, the standing ministry, that was to teach the people, were not prophets, but priests and Levites, that became learned by study;—and, for that end, God disposed them into forty-eight cities, which were as universities, where they were to study the law together, that they might be enabled to teach the people. And you may see the very prophets^a themselves, sending the people to them to be instructed. It is but a wild thing now, when prophecy has ceased so many hundred years ago, to refuse learning and a learned ministry, and to seek instruction, we know not of whom.*

II. *There is no ground in Scripture to believe, nor promise to expect, that God doth, or ever will, teach men the grammatical or logical construction of the Scripture-text.*—It is true, indeed, that he gives to a gracious saint, “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ;” as it is Ephes. i. 17. But how? Revealing to him, by experimental feeling, that which he knew, indeed, before in Scripture, but only by bare theory. As, for example,—a man, before his conversion, knows, by reading and hearing, what faith and repentance are in their definitions; but, when he comes to be converted, the Spirit of grace reveals these to him in feeling and experience. And farther, revelation, as to the understanding of Scripture, there is not the least groundwork in Scripture whereupon to expect it.

III. *When God had committed the New Testament to writing, he had revealed all that he would reveal to men on earth, of his will and way of salvation.*—The words in John xvi. 13, are appropriate to the apostles. None ever were, or will be, whom God ‘led into all truth,’ save the apostles. He leads, indeed, every saint he hath, into all truth needful for him,—but the apostles into all truth needful, both for themselves and the whole church: because God, by them, was to give

^a Hag. ii. 2. Mal. ii. 7.

the rule of faith and manners to all the church. Now, when all the truth, that God would reveal, was revealed and compact in the New Testament, as all light in the body of the sun,—must we still look for farther revelation to explain this revealing? It was foretold, that the light, that God would exhibit under the gospel, should be as the light of the sun sevenfold; and must we look for another sun of revelation to give light to this sun? The New Testament revealed the Old; and must we look for revelations to reveal the New? And so we may look ‘in infinitum.’

IV. *The main difficulty of the New Testament requires study to unfold it, rather than revelation.*—The Old Testament needed farther revelation to unfold it, and farther was promised. And, accordingly, the New Testament was a farther revelation, that did unfold it; for the great difficulty of the Old Testament was in the sense; the language every child could understand, for it was their mother-tongue. But when they could understand what the words meant, they could not understand what the sense meant; nor was it possible to find it out in abundance of places, without farther revelation. But the main difficulty of the New Testament is in the languages; unlock that clearly, and the sense ariseth easy. The Old Testament’s difficulty was in the kernel,—the New’s, in the shell. For, besides that Greek, the original, is not the native tongue now of any part of the world, there is such intermixture of Septuagint Greek, Hebrew idioms, Talmudical phrases, and allusions to the Jews’ opinions and customs, that the greatest difficulty is, to explain the language; that done, the sense is plain. Now, certainly, it is more likely to obtain understanding of languages by study, than to attain it by revelation; unless any one will yet expect that miraculous gift of tongues,—which, I suppose, there is none will make himself so ridiculous, as to say he expects. But this only by the way.

In the text, as there are two verses, so are there two distinct things observable.

In the former, a festival mentioned,—in the latter, Christ’s presence there intimated; and either of them illustrated by three circumstances.

I. The festival. 1. By its name: it was the feast of dedication. 2. By the place: it was at Jerusalem. 3. By the time: it was winter.

II. Christ's presence there. 1. By the place where he was: in the temple. 2. The particular place in the temple: Solomon's porch. 3. His posture there: he was walking. He was at the feast at Jerusalem, though it were winter; and he walked in the temple, belike to get him heat, because it was winter.

The feast of dedication (as the authors before mentioned do inform us) was instituted upon this occasion: Antiochus Epiphanes, one of the kings of Syria, one of the horns of the fourth monarchy^e, having the nation of the Jews under his power and tyranny, raised against them and their religion a very sad persecution. He forbade them to circumcise their children: he restrained the exercise of their religion; burnt the books of the law; set up idolatry; defiled the temple; set up an idolatrous altar upon the very altar of the Lord in the court of the temple. And all this for 'a time, two times, and half a time;' as Daniel styles it^d, or three years and a half.

The Jews had never felt such misery of that nature before; and Daniel, in his twelfth chapter, foretelling of that a long time before it came, saith, "That it should be such a time of trouble, as had never been, since they were a nation."

At last, Judas Maccabæus prevails against his power and tyranny,—shakes off that yoke,—restores the people and religion,—destroys his idolatry,—purges the temple,—pulls down his idol-altar, that he had erected there, yea, also the altar of the Lord which it had stood upon and defiled,—reareth up a new altar,—and, on the twenty-fifth day of the month Chisleu, which was the ninth month, or their November, dedicates the altar, and sets the public service of the temple a-foot again. And thereupon he and the generation ordained that day, and seven days forward, for the feast of dedication, to be kept annually, throughout all succeeding generations, as may be read at large in 1 Macc. iv, and in the authors beside, that I named. I might observe from hence,

How joyful a thing it is, and how joyful and perpetual a memorial it ought to carry, when decayed religion is restored to a nation.

O! that England might see that day, and come to such a feast of dedication!

^e Dan. vii. 24.

^d Chap. vii. 25.

But I desire to fix upon the latter verse of the text, and to observe Christ's presence at that feast, which is the more remarkable and strange, because there were three things, that might not only have warranted his absence thence, but even persuaded and urged it, according to the three circumstances we observed in the former verse,—the feast itself, the time, and the place.

I. The time: it was winter. An ill time to travel; and Jerusalem was a very long journey from Capernaum, the place of Christ's habitation. And the evangelist seems to have added this circumstance the rather, that we might look upon his presence there as the more remarkable.

II. It is said, that Christ was at this feast at Jerusalem; whereas he might have kept it in his own town. For, although indeed the three festivals, that God had appointed by Moses,—Passover, Pentecost, and of Tabernacles,—required men's personal appearance at Jerusalem; yet the two feasts, that were ordained afterward, Purim and Dedication, as the Jews' records tell us, might be kept at their own homes.

III. And that which was the main thing indeed,—this feast was not ordained either by the immediate appointment of God, as those three were to Moses; nor was there then any prophet in those times, that, by divine warrant, could authorise its institution: but it was only of a civil and ecclesiastical sanction, appointed by the higher powers in that generation. As our fifth of November is, indeed, of religious observation, and yet but only of human institution. These reasons might have kept Christ from going up to Jerusalem at this feast, and yet you see that he is there. From whence I observe, and on which I shall insist,

That our Saviour held in communion with the church of the Jews, in which he lived, in the public exercise of religion: and, I might add, in conformity to the common custom of the nation in civil converse.

An observation that the text plainly affordeth, those considerations laid to it, that I have mentioned. For, look upon this feast as a thing of religion and religious observation; he is present at it, as holding communion with the church in the public exercise of religion: or, look upon it only as a civil commemoration, and of a civil institution;

he is present at it, because he kept in conformity with the common customs of the nation in civil converse.

I begin with the former: and we are upon a subject very seasonable in these times of our great divisions and separations, and not unseasonable for your meeting and feast of love and unity. And I know no point, that may more usefully and profitably be studied and looked into, towards the reconciling our great separations, than this,—if so be the example of our Saviour be of authority and value with us.

For clearing the way of our discourse, let me first observe these things to you:—

I. That when I say, ‘he held communion in the public exercise of religion,’ I mean, their ‘national religion;’ by which, indeed, they were a national church. A ‘national religion’ and a ‘national church’ are phrases, that will not now be allowed of by many among Christians, though they will allow them for current among the Jews. Though, indeed, there can be no clear reason given of the difference.

It is true, indeed, that no nation can now be said to be a national church, in that restriction, that the Jews were, who were so a national church, that no people were of the church besides: yet is there the very same cause, that made them a national church, that may make other nations so now. Their being a ‘peculiar people’ did not make them a ‘national church;’ for that made them only an ‘only church.’ Nor did their ceremonial rites in religion make them a ‘national church;’ for that made them only a ‘distinct nation.’ But that that did properly make and denominate them a national church, was the worship of God, and the exercise of religion went through the whole nation. And I see not, why Christian nations, where there is the very same reason, may not also carry the very same name.

In the apostles’ times, indeed, there was no national church of the gospel; and that is most true, that they plead, that hold the contrary to what I assert;—namely, that it is not said ‘the church of Achaia, the church of Galatia, Judea, Macedonia,’ &c. but the ‘churches.’ And there is very good reason, why it is so said. For those whole nations had not yet received the gospel: but as there was a Christian church in one place, so there was a heathen temple in another, and a Jewish synagogue in another, nay, it may be, three for one, ten for one. But when the whole nation came to

profess the gospel, and there were no church but Christian, then whole Achaia, whole Macedonia, &c. were national churches.

Observe that in Isa. xix. 24, 25; "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the earth: when the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, &c. Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." Israel was a national church, because the whole nation professed religion, and worshipped God. Egypt and Assyria could not be called so, when heathen temples, and idolatrous worship, and Jews' synagogues and Judaisms, were intermixed; but when all Egypt and all Assyria came to own the same religion, and worship of God in the way of the gospel, why might they not hear the same name of national churches, as well as Israel?

We mean, then, that Christ held communion with the church of the Jews in the public exercise of that religion, which was the seated and fixed religion of the nation, and which went through the nation.

II. The religion of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, was not the national religion, but sects and excrescences from it: therefore, it no whit denies Christ communicating with the religion of the nation, though he did not communicate with the religion of these sects.

You may take up in your thoughts the whole nation of the Jews, when Christ came among them, in two parts: and you may very well so take them up, under the representation of an overflowing flood. Let Jordan, their own river, be the instance. It is said, in Josh. iii. 15, that "Jordan overflowed his banks all barley-harvest." Then a great part of the water ran in the channel, and another part flowed over the banks, and wasted what was in the way. So the greatest part of the nation kept in the channel of their national religion; and a great part,—namely, these sects,—overflowed the bounds, went beyond the proper current, especially the first and the last, and spoiled all with overdoing.

Now out of whether of these two parts did Christ gather those thousands,—nay, those several thousands, as Acts xxi. 20,—that came into the profession of the gospel? Some, indeed, from among those sects; but the far greatest part from among them, that kept in the channel of the national

religion. For observe, what sad doom the Scripture passes upon those sects severally and jointly.

The Pharisees single, Christ curseth and denounceth woe against^d, over and over again.

The Pharisees and Sadducees together, John proclaimeth ‘a generation of vipers^e.’

The Pharisees, and Sadducees, and Essenes, altogether, the ‘three evil shepherds’ that mislead the people,—Christ professeth that he hated them, as they did him^f.

Now, it is no wonder, if Christ communicated not with the religion of them, that were so abominable in themselves and to him, and their religion so wild; and it had been a wonder, if he should not have communicated with them, to whom he came more especially to be a minister, and from among whom he was to gather so great a harvest.

And now, having premised these things, to come to prove and clear the assertion before us, we shall, first, consider the obligations, that lay upon Christ, and bound him to hold communion with the church wherein he lived,—and the examples and instances, that show he did so. The former will evince ‘de jure,’—the latter, ‘de facto.’

I. Need I to prove, that Christ was a member of the church of the Jews? And if that be granted, it can hardly be denied, that he was bound to keep communion with the church, of which he was a member. The apostle^g tells us, that Christ was ‘of the blood of the Jews:’ and was he of their nation only, and not of their church? He was “minister of the circumcision:” and was he not of the church, of which he was minister?

II. I need as little to prove, that he was admitted to communion with the church by circumcision. That stamped him for an Israelite, and joined him to Israel. In Exod. xii. 44, “But every man’s servant, that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof.” Circumcise him, and thou bringest him into communion; then he may eat, nay, then he must eat, the passover.

III. Now, as he was a member of the church of the Jews, as a Jew, and admitted to the full communion with it by circumcision,—so there were two things besides engaged him, that he did not, that he might not, depart from that communion.

^d Matt. xxiii.

^e Matt. iii.

^f Zech. xi. 8.

^g Rom. ix. 5.

1. The obligation of the law was upon him, for things of divine institution. And,

2. The tenderness of his own heart, not to give offence in things indifferent.

First, The apostle tells us^h, that “he was made under the law.” He was under the moral law, as man, bound to observe it upon duty, as all men are. He was also put under it, as Mediator, that he might fulfil it; and so he saith himselfⁱ, “I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.” It is a strange quotation the apostle makes in Heb. ii. 12, to prove, that Christ was not ashamed to call his saints ‘brethren;’ “I will declare thy name amongst my brethren;” that is plain and pregnant: but ver. 13, “And again, I will trust in him.” How doth the proof speak to the thing proposed? Why, very properly thus,—‘As the saints trusted in God, so did he; as it was their duty, so it was his; he being bound as man, to the obedience of the moral law, as well as any of his; and to it as Mediator, for the fulfilling of it in behalf of his.’

Nay, he was put under the whole law and economy of Moses: the ceremonial law, which was the great law of their religion, as well as the moral.

Take their ceremonial religion in all its relations, and he was under the bond of all.

1. As it was a badge of distinction to difference an Israelite from all other nations,—so he was bound under it, as being a Jew.

2. As it was a way of God’s instituted worship, so he was bound under it as one religious.

3. As it was the bond of Israel’s communion in God’s worship, so he was bound under it as a member of that church.

‘True (you will say), he was bound to these rites, that were of divine institution; but a great part of their religion consisted then of human inventions, which neither were of divine authority, nor, some of them, seemed of any great solidity:’ yet,

Secondly, Even in these things, whilst they were not sinful in themselves, he would not break off communion from the way of their religion, because he would not give offence. That reason that he gives about paying the half-

^h Gal. iv. 4.

ⁱ Matt. v. 17.

shekel, went along with him in other things^k, "Lest we give them offence." He might have stood upon the argument, that he used in ver. 26,—his own immunity from such payments,—as being the great 'King's son,' to whom they were paid. He might have stood against the present employment of the money so paid;—it was for the repair of the temple; and now the temple was become 'a den of thieves.' It was for buying things for the service at the altar, and he might have pleaded the corruption of the priests and of the service; but he stands not out, but complies upon this account, 'lest we should give them offence.'

When he had healed a leper^l, he commands him "to go and show himself to the priest, and to offer his gift" due upon such occasions. And why should he enjoin him the ordinary observance, when his cleansing was extraordinary? Why should he send him to undergo the common rites of cleansing, when he was entirely cleansed already? And these rites also seeming not to carry much solidity with them:—for he must stand in the court-gate of the temple, and not himself go in, but thrust his head in, that the blood of his offering might be put upon the tip of his ear. For neither might the blood be brought out of the court, because it was holy; nor might he go into the court, because he was not yet cleansed; but thus standing and thrusting in his head, he saved both cautions. A strange rite and posture, you will say,—yet will Christ, for all that, have the man to undergo those common rites used in that part of service, because he would not give offence, either by crossing or hindering.

His own precept speaks not only his own practice, but even his own mind and sense; and he would never go contrary to that, to which he exhorted others^m; "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's chair;" they are the chief magistrates, and sit in the legislative chair; therefore, "whatsoever they command you," in things not sinful, "do."

And it was a great deal easier to bring in sinless human inventions into divine worship then, than it is under the gospel. For when even their whole religion, given and appointed by God himself, consisted, namely, of ceremony, it was less to add ceremony to ceremony, than it is now, under the gospel; whose simplicity hath excluded such

^k Matt. xvii. 27.

^l Matt. viii. 4.

^m Matt. xxiii. 1.

ceremoniousness altogether. God, by Moses, had given general rules for sacrifice, purifications, worship, and other things. Now, there were some particulars necessary for the carrying on of those generals, which either were not at all, or not plainly, set down by Moses. Now, if the learned leaders of that nation, finding it needful that something should be stated in those particulars, and did, according to their best judgment, determine such and such things,—it was but helping forward ceremoniousness by ceremoniousness, and stating particular practices suitable to the general end and intent; which how any ceremoniousness may be to the gospels, is not so easy, if possible at all, to find out or digest. And, therefore, although I would set before you the great example of our Lord and Master, of holding communion with the church,—yet, upon this very thing that we are now speaking of, it may give every one a time to consider, whether human inventions do so well and sinlessly comply with divine worship now, as they might do then.

And thus, having considered Christ's obligations to hold communion, now let us come to observe his practice. And that we shall take up in these two heads,—his public devotions, and his gospel-institutions. And the former, in observing his demeanour at the festivals in Jerusalem, and in the synagogue.

As to the first, God appointed the three festivals, Passover, Pentecost, and of Tabernacles, for religion and for communion; and for communion the rather.

I say, 'for communion the rather.' For the services that Israel were to perform at them at Jerusalem, might have been done by them there, had they severally gone up thither; but God would have them to go up, and meet there altogether; and to do those things altogether, that he might tie them to communion in religion, as well as to religion; and that they might own and keep their 'communion,' as well as their 'religion.'

Our evangelist gives us account of Christ's resorting to these festivals: and can we think, that, when he came there, he failed of either of the ends, for which all came thither? and that he went up, as the rest of the church did, to withdraw from the communion of the church, or to cross it when he came there? Let us look on the examples, this evangelist gives us.

I. He gives an account of his going up to the Passover; and, unless there may be some scruple about the third, from John vi, he resorted to all between his baptism and his death. Now, in all the evangelists you cannot find, that when he came there, he differed the least tittle from the custom and order, that was constantly used by the church at that solemnity. Nay, they that are versed in the Jews' records, and see their customs there, may show you, how he followed the rubrics and ritual of that Passover from point to point. His manner of sitting at the table, his beginning the meal with a cup of wine, his ending it with a cup of blessing,—his using bread and wine,—his concluding with a psalm; and, indeed, his whole demeanour at the meal, compared with the Jews' rubric and custom for the solemnity, does clearly speak, that he kept close communion with the whole church in that great symbol of communion. He that was to be the paschal lamb himself, and to fulfil what the typical ordinance signified,—would not, might not, confound or cross the constant received order of that solemnity.

II. He gives us an account of his being at the feast of tabernacles, chap. vii: and that he should go up then, and to the feast, one may think it strange,—if he consider, what strange rites and customs were then used.

1. That all the people, men and children, should go up and down with palm and willow-branches in their hands, singing and shaking them, and walking in procession with them. One would think it had been too light a thing for him to have been present at; yet he is so far from breaking communion for such a rite as this, or crossing it, that he admits the entertainment of himself into the city at another time, with the very same procession.

2. But this was not all. This might plead for something of divine institution from Lev. xxiii. 40: but there was another custom yet stranger; and what warrant can we find of it? Every day of that festival, one of the priests took a silver flagon, went and fetched water at the fountain Siloam, and came and poured it on the altar. All the year long they poured wine upon the altar for the drink-offering; but now, and never but now, they poured water too. None could tell who instituted this rite, nor upon what occasion, nor well what it signified; only the Jews' records tell us, that some

said it signified 'the pouring out of the Holy Ghost.' Now, at night, after the water had been thus poured on the altar by day, the grandees of the people, the gravest, wisest, and of chiefest authority, met in one of the courts of the temple, and there, by torch-light, danced, capered, and sung, that you might have thought the men besides themselves. And this, they said, 'was the rejoicing for the pouring out of the water:' insomuch, that it grew into a common proverb, 'He that never saw the rejoicing for the pouring out of the water, never saw rejoicing, in all his life.' One would think, that these were strange passages for Christ to be present at, or to hold communion with them that used them; and yet he is so far from withdrawing or crossing, that he instructs the people to know the right meaning in this custom, or at least would draw their minds higher than the bare rites: John vii. 37, 38; "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water:" q. d. "Ye go to Siloam for water from that text" [for the Jews themselves say, the custom took ground from that text], "Come to me for water, and drink: and ye pour out a flagon of water upon the altar, to represent the pouring out of the Holy Ghost; I am he that pour him out; and he that believeth on me, even rivers of waters shall flow out of him."

III. He giveth us an account, in the text, of his being present at the feast of dedication. The chiefest solemnity of which was this strange custom also,—viz. to light up candles in every house: one candle, the first night of the feast,—two, the second,—three, the third; and so to increase the number of the candles, as the account of the days increased; so that, on the eighth night, there were at least eight candles burning in every house. I say, 'at least eight.' For Maimonides tells us, that those that would show themselves forward and zealous indeed, lighted up a candle the first night for every person in the house. As, if there were ten persons, ten candles, the first night,—twenty, the second,—and so augmenting every day, that, on the eighth night, there were burning eighty candles. From this, as Josephus tells us, the feast was called *φῶτα*, that is 'light:' and he conceives the reason of the custom to have been, because of the

'light,' that rose to the people after the great 'darkness' of their misery.

One would scarcely think, that Christ should make any account of a festival, when such a thing as this was one of the greatest solemnities: and yet, because he will show his communion with the church, he goes to Jerusalem to this feast, or at least is there present at it; when he might as well have kept it at home; and he goes, though in winter, when so evil travelling.

Many more examples might be produced, by which might be illustrated his holding communion in the festivals at Jerusalem; but these may suffice. And now, from these, let us follow him to the synagogues.

The evangelists make it plain, that it was his manner to go to the synagogues every sabbath-day. And what to do there? To disturb the congregation? To cross the service? To sit dumb, whilst others sung psalms? To put on his hat [that I may express it by our known English garb], while others sat bare? To do every thing, or any thing, cross to the order of the synagogue [as there are too many among us, at this day, of this cross-grained humour]? No; no such thing came near his most meek and divine spirit. His noise or troublesomeness was not heard in the streets, much less in the place and time of divine worship. But he went to the public congregation, to join with the congregation in the worship of God, as the duty of the sabbath did require. He went, indeed, to preach; but withal he joined with the congregation in other parts of divine service, as he desired that they should join with him in that. We will allege but one example, having a farther hint about this to give hereafter.

It is said, Luke iv. 16, that "as his custom was, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up for to read." It had been his constant custom to go to that synagogue of Nazareth, his parish-church, every sabbath-day; but this is the first time that he preached there. And in the clause, "he stood up for to read," there is more than every one observes. He *preached* in other synagogues; but he *read* in none but this. For he that read in the synagogue, was a member of the synagogue; and he, by reading, showed that he owned himself, and was owned to be, one of this. Now, what a kind of people the congregation of Nazareth was, we may somewhat guess from that passage, "Can any

good thing come out of Nazareth?" But plainly enough from what follows in the same story, that they would have murdered him, because his doctrine pleased them not, ver. 29. And yet did he keep himself till then to that congregation, owned himself a member of it, read in it as a member of it, till his function called him, and the fear of his life forced him, thence.

And thus much be spoken of his public devotions; from thence we pass to his gospel-institutions,—and they speak to the very same tenor, that the other did, that he held communion with the church of the Jews, in which he lived. Of which I shall give you these four instances:—

I. *His institution of baptism.*—Think not that baptism was never used, till John Baptist came and baptized. It was used in the church of the Jews many generations before he was born, and for the very same end that he used it, and it hath been used ever since,—viz. for introduction and admission into the church. The Jews did not only use baptism in their legal washings and purifications, but also in the way that we do,—viz. to admit into their church. Their own records (enemies sufficient to our Christian baptism) yet thus far bear witness also to it; and an enemy's testimony is a double witness. For they tell, that when any proselytes came in from among the heathen, to embrace the faith and religion of the Jews, they first circumcised them,—and when they were whole, then they baptized them: and that they so baptized the whole family, where the master came in, even wife and children with him. So that baptism of men, women, and children, was no new thing among them, when John Baptist came baptizing, but a thing as well known as with us now. And hence it was that Christ gave no rule how to baptize, or when to baptize; because they knew the manner, and knew, that men, women, and children, were baptized, as we know it now. It pleaded no precept to baptize infants, and no example. It needed not: for Christ took up baptism as he found it, a thing commonly known; and it was needful only to give a precept to make it an evangelical ordinance. As for other circumstances, how to baptize, and when to baptize, there needed no such rule, since common custom and use of the ordinance had taught that for many ages before. The parliament makes a law, 'let every one resort to the public congregation on the sabbath,' and ex-

presses no more. He would be laughed at, that, in after times, should deny, that praying, preaching, singing psalms, &c, should be used in the congregation, because there is no such command in the parliament's act. Common and known custom, and the constant use of such things in the congregation, made it needless to insert those particulars. And so it is in this case.

Doth not this speak Christ's communion with the church of the Jews, and his compliance with the public exercise of their religion, when he would take one of their ordinances [and no one knew, who first instituted it among them], and make it an evangelical ordinance?

I might speak the like of his institution of the other sacrament,—the Lord's supper; but I need to speak no more of that, than what I said about his keeping of the Passover before.

II. *His institution of a standing ministry under the gospel*, speaks also his conformity to the church of the Jews. They had a standing ministry; so would he. They ordained their teachers by imposition of hands; he ordained the like ordination. Remarkable is that of the apostle, Heb. vi. 2: observe here, the doctrine of imposition of hands, in ordination, is a fundamental point, as well as the doctrine of faith and repentance. See ver. 1: "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptism, and of laying on of hands," &c. As the doctrine of faith is a fundamental point, so this; that a gospel-principle, so this. And what a point of faith it is, may be seen by proposing this question, which the church, when the apostle wrote, would propose, "Whither must we go for instruction, when the apostles and inspired men are gone?" 'Why (say the apostles), this is a fundamental point, that Christ hath set up a standing ministry by ordination.' Hence that evangelical promise and prediction, Isa. lxvi. 21; "And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord." Not priests and Levites, as they offered sacrifices at the temple, but as they were the standing ministry through the nation. And see ver. 20; "They shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord."

Think you, if Christ had despised the current of the pub-

lic practice of religion among the Jews, he would have so conformed to it in a thing of such weight?

III. *His institution of God's public worship under the gospel,* speaks also the same conformity. The public worship of God among the Jews was twofold : at the temple, and in the synagogues.

At the temple; sacrificing, washings, purifyings, &c.

In the synagogues; reading, preaching, hearing, and praying.

That at the temple was ceremonial; and that Christ abolished, having fulfilled what ceremonies meant. But the worship in the synagogue was moral and perpetual, and so translated by him into the Christian church.

In that great controversy, that hath been so much canvassed, about church-government, I should first lay down this for a foundation, which may, I conceive, be very clearly made good :

‘That Christ, by himself and his apostles, platforming the model of churches under the gospel, did keep very close to the platform of synagogues, and synagogue-worship under the law.’—This might be showed by showing parallel practices in the apostolic churches, to those that were in the synagogues. As, a public minister,—deacons,—reading,—preaching,—praying,—collections for the poor,—and love-feasts, or entertainment of strangers at the public charge; but I shall fix particularly upon the ‘public minister.’

All the titles that are given to ministers of the gospel, are the very same that were given to the public minister in the synagogue. A gospel-minister is called ‘angelus ecclesiæ;’ so was the minister in the synagogue called שליח ציבור ‘the angel’ or ‘messenger of the congregation.’ The ministers of the gospel are called ‘episcopi,’ ‘bishops,’ or ‘overseers;’ so was the minister in every synagogue called חזן הכנסת ‘chazan hacconeseth,’ ‘the overseer of the congregation.’ They are called ‘rulers,’ ‘elders,’ and ‘those that are set over the people;’ so were the ministers of the synagogue called in every title.

Now, doth not all this speak Christ's owning conformity to the platform, discipline, and worship, in the synagogues, when he thus translated all into the Christian church? And this doth plainly show, what we hinted before, that Christ's resorting constantly to the synagogue, was to join with them

in the worship there, as well as to preach, or to heal what diseased he met with there.

IV. *His institution of the Lord's prayer* tells, that he held conformity with the church in the public exercise of religion. They that are of opinion, that the Lord's prayer was not given for a form to be used 'totidem verbis,'—that it is not fit to be joined with our prayers,—that it is not fit to be said by all, because all may not call God, 'our Father;'—did they but clearly see, in what conformity to the practice in the Jewish church, both the prayer was given, and every petition and phrase in it doth go, they would be of another opinion, if they be not espoused to their own.

The surest and safest construction of phrases and passages in the New Testament, is not by framing a sense of our own, which we think fair and probable, but by observing how such phrases and passages were understood by them to whom they were then uttered, according to the common use and signification of such phrases and passages, in the vulgar sense and use of the nation. It is not what conceits or constructions we can mint out of our invention, to maintain the opinions about this prayer, that I mentioned before; but it is best to cast, how the disciples, to whom it was given, did, or could, conceive of it, upon such observations on it as these.

They knew, that such short forms of prayer were usual in the nation: that such forms were given by masters to their scholars, to be used 'verbatim:' that such were to be subjoined to their other prayers: that the most common title, whereby the whole nation called God, was 'our Father, which art in heaven:' that every petition in this prayer was such, as was also usual in the nation: so that they saw, that Christ had given this prayer directly according to the custom, style, and form, of the nation, and that he had given no exception to them about it. Therefore, how could they understand, or conceive of it, according to the common custom of the nation in such cases, but that it was to be used 'in terminis,' and to be joined to their prayers?

By these few examples, indeed, of multitudes that might be produced,—you see an evident proof of his holding communion all along his practice.

Thus have I done with the former part of the doctrine, viz. 'That our Saviour held in communion with the church of the Jews, in the public exercise of religion.'—I should

now take up the latter; ‘That he conformed to the common customs of the nation in civil converse.’ And here we are come into as large a field as the other, if not larger; a subject of abundant proof and clearness, and which if I should go about to evidence by all examples that might be produced, the day would fail me. I shall say no more upon it but this, ‘That, besides that what is said already, doth abundantly prove it, one that hath perused the Jews’ writings, and observed both the common dialect, and the customs of the nation in those times, may observe Christ’s conformity to their customs, almost in every one of his actions,—and his conformity to their phrase, language, and manner of speech, almost in every one of his speeches.’

And as here is wisdom, so here is learning, from knowledge of their customs and languages, to unlock the phrases and passages of the New Testament, to which it alludes all along. It is not what we can guess upon these and the other speeches of Christ, where he is obscure; but the best way to find out the sense is, to observe how such words, which are their own language, would be taken according to the common acceptation of them in the nation,—and how they understood them, to whom they were spoken.

I might be large in application. And, indeed, in our divided times, one can never speak too much upon this subject. But what need I do more among Christians, than to leave so plain a copy of Christ before them? I shall leave only this request with you concerning what hath been spoken: deal as the Bereans, “Search the Scriptures diligently.” Let this hint, your poor countrymen hath given you, go along with you, as you read the New Testament: see there, whether ever you find Christ, but going on in that communion I have spoken. And till you find him dividing, I hope there is none here, but will account his example a rule inviolable.

And let me give you caution against that opinion, that, by mistake of a text or two, sticks not to say, that the gospel doth naturally produce division; Matt. x. 34, 35, “Think not, that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father,” &c. And, Luke xii. 51, 52; “Suppose ye, that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division,” &c. It were strange, if these

should be natural effects of the gospel of peace ; and how doth such production agree with that of Isa. ii. 4? " They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation," &c. And, chap. xi. 9 ; " They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." And it were strange, that Christ and his gospel should be of so different tempers ; he to keep so close to communion himself, and to give a gospel that should break it. But mistake not the texts ; they speak not, that Christ would send those divisions by the ' gospel,' but by his ' vengeance.' He was most fearfully to destroy the cursed unbelievers, the nation of the Jews ; and one dreadful way of the execution of that vengeance was, by sending a spirit of division among the nation, whereby they even destroyed themselves. The stories of their horrid civil wars, burnings, plunderings, assassinations one of another,—the like example is in no stories,—are a most plain exposition of those texts, and a dreadful accomplishment of that denunciation. The other texts I mentioned, they show the natural and genuine product of the gospel ; " They shall beat their swords into ploughshares," &c. But when will that be ? Never, according to universal obtaining. Ever have been wars, and ever will be, because ever will be lusts. And yet these are fulfilled in the sense proposed by the prophets,—viz. that God hath fully afforded means for this. The gospel hath enough in it to move men to peace, but the fault is in themselves. God hath not failed, but men fail. As it is in Rom. iii. 3 ; " What, if some did not believe ; shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect ?" So, what if some be unpeaceable,—shall their divisions make the gospel of peace of none effect ? So, in other prophecies, to make like construction ; Jer. xxxi. 34, " They shall no more teach every man his neighbour ; for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest." It never was, never will be.—Isa. lxxv. 20 ; " There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days." It never was, nor will be. Yet God hath accomplished what he promised ; he hath afforded means, that it might be so.

Let me, therefore, leave this great copy of peaceableness and communion with you.

A S E R M O N^a,
PREACHED BEFORE
THE STAFFORDSHIRE-NATIVES,
AT
ST. MARY WOLCHURCH, LONDON,

NOVEMBER 22, 1660.

JUDE, ver. 12.

These are spots in your feasts of charity.

I MUST take up that style and strain of excuse, to begin withal, that St. Paul doth to his countrymen about his appeal unto Cæsar; “I have nothing (saith he) to accuse my nation of, though I have been put upon it to make such an appeal.” So, I have nothing, dear countrymen, to accuse this your feast of charity of, nor nothing to accuse any of, that are come to it, though I have chosen these words, that speak so point-blank of spots, that occurred in such kind of feasts. But I have fixed upon the words, partly, that I might speak in some kind of parity to that discourse, that I made to you at our last meeting upon this occasion; and chiefly, that I might give you caution against such, that to feasts are spots,—to charity, destructive,—and to all meetings, dangerous.

Who they were, that our apostle meaneth, I shall clear to you by these two observations:—

I. That, as it was foretold by the Holy Spirit in the prophets, that the best and most comfortable things, that ever should accrue to the church of the Jews, should accrue to them in the last days, that is, of Jerusalem;—for so is that expression, “the last days,” in most places of Scripture, to be understood:—so was it also foretold by the same Spirit, that the worst things that ever should accrue to it, should be in those “last days,” also. It was foretold, that, in those last days, “The mountain of the Lord’s house should be established in the top of the mountains, and should be

^a English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1043.

exalted above the hills, and that all nations should flow unto it^a." That, in those last days, "God would pour out his Spirit upon the servants and upon the handmaids; and that he would show wonders in the heavens and in the earth^b," &c. That, in those last days, "The children of Israel should return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and should fear the Lord and his goodness^c:" and all other things of the greatest comfort. So it was also foretold, that in those "last days, perilous times and persons should come^d." In those "last days, there should come scoffers, walking after their own lusts^e." In those "last days, there should be many antichrists^f:" and "by this we know, that it is the last time."

Among all other the sad things that befel in those last days of Jerusalem, and the commonwealth of the Jews, one of the greatest was, that there was a most horrid and very general apostasy, or falling away from faith, in the most churches of the Jews, that had embraced the gospel; they turning back to their old Judaism and vain traditions again. Of this the Spirit had spoken expressly^g. Of this our Saviour had foretold, in that sad application of the parable; "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house, from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation^h." The devil had been cast out of a very great part of the nation of the Jews. He thought to find rest there, but found none; such notable success had the gospel of Christ found in that nation. Upon which the devil marshalleth up all his malice, strength, and subtilty, "taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself," and so he at last prevails, to cause a grievous defection in the people from Christianity: "they enter in and dwell there, and their last state was worse than their first." So was it with that generation. Of this he had foretold; "And because iniquity shall abound, the

^a Isa. ii. 2.^b Joel, ii. 29, 30, &c.^c Hos. iii. 5.^d 2 Tim. iii. 1.^e 2 Pet. iii. 3.^f 1 John, ii. 18.^g 1 Tim. iv. 1.^h Matt. xii. 45, &c.

love of many shall wax coldⁱ." Of this the apostle speaketh, 2 Thess. ii. 3; that, before the terrible day of the Lord, and his vengeance, against Jerusalem,—for so that phrase doth signify almost continually,—there should be a falling away. Of this you find sad footings in the church of Galatia^j; of Colosse^k; of Ephesus^l. And, indeed, you may track the footing of it in all the Epistles of the apostles.

II. The chief cursed promoters and procurers of this backsliding, were that multitude of false teachers of the Jewish nation, that went about, pretending to have the spirit of prophecy and revelation; and many of them working miracles by the power of magic; so shaking the minds of men, and drawing them away from the faith of the gospel of Christ. Of these our Saviour had foretold, when he foretold of the miseries, that should occur in those last days of Jerusalem^m. Of these the apostle foretold, when he spake of the Jewish antichrist,—for of the Jew he speaksⁿ,—and saith, "he would come after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders." And of these the same apostle speaks in that obscure place, "No man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed^p." For divers went about pretending to the Spirit, and yet cursed our Lord Jesus. Mention and footing of these you may find almost in all the Epistles of the apostles, more especially in the Second Epistle of St. Peter, and in this Epistle of St. Jude, throughout. These are they, that the text saith were "spots, certain deceivers crept in," προγεγραμμένοι^q: men that took on them to have the Spirit, but were "sensual, not having the Spirit^r;" "and filthy dreamers^s." These were the spots.

What these feasts of charity were, is some scruple. The more general opinion is, that they were solemn meals, which every congregation had, and ate at together, at receiving the sacrament: some think instantly before, some after. And the groundwork of this opinion is, that, "in eating, every one taketh before other his own supper^t." Thereupon, Beza, without any sticking: "At those feasts (saith he), which they called Ἀγάπας, they received the sacrament, as is plain out of 1 Cor. xi." Whereas, such feasts as these suppers, were as far from the apostle's meaning, as the apostle is far from

ⁱ Matt. xxiv. 12.^j Gal. iii. 3, and iv. 9, 10.^k Col. ii. 20.^l Rev. ii. 4.^m Matt. xxiv. 24.ⁿ 2 Thess. ii. 9.^p 1 Cor. xii. 3.^q Jude, ver. 4.^r Ver. 19.^s Ver. 8.^t 1 Cor. xi. 21.

commending or approving them. For you may observe, that he doth not only, nor so much, condemn the misdemeanours at those suppers, as he doth the suppers themselves, as a misdemeanour. For, 1. He tells plainly, that by them, they vilified the church, or the place of their public meeting. 2. That they shamed the poor, who could not bring in so good commons and victuals. And, 3. That if they were so hungry, they should eat every one at home.

There are such dreadful and terrible glosses made of the unworthy eating and drinking at these feasts, here mentioned, that many Christians now-a-days are terrified from partaking of the Lord's supper, for fear lest they fall under this unworthy eating and drinking, and the judgment consequent upon it. Whereas, I know you will think it strange, if I say it, yet I fear not to say it,—that I believe, there is not a Christian now in the world, that receives the sacrament unworthily, in that sense the apostle speaks of 'unworthy receiving' there. Mistake me not; I say, in that sense that the apostle speaks of there. For, whereas all churches consisted then of Jews and Gentiles, and this of Corinth particularly, as appears in the story of its first planting^u, and hence were their divisions: this was the cause of their other divisions^v, the Gentile party saying, "I am of Paul," &c. The Jewish party even in all churches, in this church undoubtedly, hankered too much after their old Judaism; this old leaven, that the apostle gives them caution against^w. Two smacks of Judaism you find them tainted with, which the apostle hints in that eleventh chapter, before he speaks of their misreceiving of the sacrament. The first was, that the men would not pray, but with their faces covered: which was a mere Judaizing superstition. And the other, that they wore long hair: as it appears by his so smartly reproving the thing, which relished of the rite of Nazarites,—a mere Judaic custom. Upon that very account did Absalom wear his long hair: which, some think, he did of pride, because that kind of pride is grown into fashion among us. But he did it as being or pretending to be under a Nazarite's vow^x. And as they thus Judaized in those two things (and I might show their speaking with strange tongues, &c. had a smatch of Judaism also), so did they Judaize about the sacrament.

It was a common and generally-received opinion among

^u Acts, xviii.

^v 1 Cor. i. 12.

^w 1 Cor. v. 8.

^x 2 Sam. xv. 8.

the Jewish nation, That Messias, when he came, should no whit alter, much less abolish, any of their Mosaic ordinances, but should enhance them to a greater glory. That he should make their sacrifices, purifications, sabbaths, festivals, and all other usances, far more resplendent and glorious, than ever they had been. According to this opinion, did these Jewish Christians of Corinth understand and conceive concerning the sacrament. They observed not, that it was a remembrance of Christ's death, which the apostle minds them to observe, 1 Cor. xi. 26; nor did they discern the Lord's body at all in it, as the apostle lasheth them for not doing, ver. 29. But they reputed it only as a farther enhancement of their delivery out of Egypt; and that Christ had only ordained it, as a farther addition to this Passover, and to that memorial. Hence those Proccœnia were in imitation of the Passover-suppers, Judaizing in them, and in their opinion and receiving of the sacrament. Which were as far from being any ground for these feasts of charity in that sense, that they are commonly interpreted in, as Judaism from Christianity,—error from truth,—as a thing odious, and to be abhorred, in Christianity, from a thing laudable, and of divine approval.

If, therefore, I may have liberty to dissent from an opinion so generally received, I should say, these feasts of love were the entertainment of strangers. It was a constant custom among the Jews, that, at every synagogue, a place and persons were appointed for the reception of strangers; as appears by their own writings. That this custom was translated into Christian congregations, may be concluded, partly by the necessity of such a thing, at that time when the apostles and disciples went abroad to preach, without money or provision of their own, and could not have subsisted without such entertainments,—and partly, because we read of Gaius, Rom. xvi. 23; and Phœbe, ver. 1; and women that washed strangers' feet.

So did these false teachers walk abroad, and came as strangers (for they crept in unawares, ver. 4), taking on them to be true: and so the churches entertained them in such entertainments, in those feasts of charity, at the common charge, looking on them as true ministers and disciples, but they proved spots and *rocks* (for so the Greek word signifies) in those entertainments: spots, that shamed the company they conversed with, and soiled them with the

filth of errors and false doctrines; and rocks, at which multitudes of souls dashed, split, and shipwrecked faith and their salvation.

I am not ignorant of the variety of reading and interpretation of these words, as much as in most places: but I shall not insist upon that: for it would be but expense of time, since both antiquity embraceth the reading, as we do,—and an easy discovery might be made by what mistakes other readings and interpretations took place.

In the words there are three parts:—

I. The persons, in the first word ‘these.’

II. One particular act of theirs, hinted in the last words, ‘they crept into their feasts of charity.’

III. What and how they proved there,—they were ‘spots,’ or rocks, and did mischief.

I might take up words by way of descant upon the present occasion, and tell you what are spots in the feasts and entertainments,—riot and drunkenness, obscene and filthy communication, quarrelling and contention, uncharitableness and forgetting of the poor; these, and other things, are spots. But I keep close to the apostle’s meaning, and consider the persons he speaks of, such as I described unto you, false teachers, that pretended to the Spirit, and to preach and work miracles by the Spirit. And I shall discourse a little concerning the great delusion, that is by pretence of the Spirit: and this the rather, that I may speak something like in subsequence to that I treated upon at our last meeting. Then I exhorted you to hold communion by the example of Christ: for separation, I then told you, was the undoing of our church. Now I give caution against the pretence of those, that preach and expound Scripture by the Spirit: for that is the cause of separation, and hath proved the ruin of religion.

And although this change of times doth seem to promise, that this delusion in time will die, so that the present discourse may seem not so very pertinent,—yet doth that mischief now live, move, delude, and captivate silly souls, little less than it hath done all along. Therefore, give me leave a little to discover this delusion to you, that you may not only be the better fenced against it, that it do not deceive you,—but that you may be the better furnished to stop the mouths of those, that pretend to it.

For the prosecuting this argument, you must distinguish between the false pretence to the Spirit of sanctification, and to the spirit of revelation. By the former, men deceive themselves,—by the latter, others. They deceive themselves, by conceiving they have the former, because they have something like it; but these deceive others by the pretence of the latter, though they have nothing like it.

There is no grace, but there is a false coin, minted by the devil to dissemble it. As the harlot takes the live child from the unwitting mother, and fosters the dead one in the room: and so lies the poor woman deceived: and so the poor man is deceived, and thinks he hath saving grace, when it is but common,—and the Spirit of sanctification, when it is but the spirit of bondage. But I shall not insist on this, but proceed to the other pretence,—viz. to the spirit of revelation and prophecy, whereby these, in the text, deceived others.

I shall not need to show you, how this hath been the great cheat in all times. There were false prophets before the captivity, and false prophets after it; such pretenders almost in all times. I shall strip this delusion naked, and whip it before you, by observing these four things:—

I. No degree of holiness whatsoever doth necessarily beget and infer the spirit of revelation, as the cause produceth the effect. It is the first cheat that these men put upon themselves and others, by concluding, ‘I am a saint; therefore, I have the Spirit, and I preach and expound Scripture by the Spirit:’ whereas, I say, no degree of sanctification doth necessarily beget and produce that of revelation. I clear this from the nature of the thing itself, and by examples.

First; From the nature of the thing. The Spirit of holiness and revelation are far different; therefore, the one is not the cause of the other. The cause and the effect have a parity and similitude one with another; but these are far from being so.

1. They are impartible to different subjects:—holiness, only to holy men; the spirit of revelation, sometimes to wicked men. So it was imparted to Balaam^y; so likewise to Judas and Caiaphas.

2. They are bestowed upon different ends:—holiness for

^y Num. xxiii.

the good of him that hath it; revelation, for the benefit of others.

3. They are of different manners and operations. The Spirit of sanctification changeth the heart; Paul is a Saul no more: revelation doth not; Judas is a Judas still.

4. They are of different diffusion in the soul: sanctification is quite through^z,—revelation, only in, the understanding.

5. They are of different effects: sanctification never produceth but what is good; revelation may produce what is evil; knowledge puffeth up.

Now, see what a cheat they are in this to themselves (if they believe it themselves), and to others that believe it, in this argumentation, 'I am holy; therefore, I have the spirit of revelation.'

To the farther confuting of this, add but two examples.

1. The first Adam. He was as holy, as created nature could be; and yet, had he the spirit of revelation? Not the Spirit at all. He was most holy, yet had not the Spirit of sanctification; most full of knowledge, yet had not the spirit of revelation: but all his holiness was founded only in his nature, as he was created. God made him holy, and left him to stand upon his own holiness, and had not the assistance of the Spirit at all. So he had great knowledge; yet not the spirit of revelation, either to know things to come, or to know things beyond their natures and causes. But,

2. Consider the second Adam. He was holiness itself, yet had he not the spirit of revelation by that holiness. In Christ there were two things:—the holiness of his person, by union with the Godhead, and the endowment of the Spirit upon his person. He was so holy, that he was not only without sin, but he was impeccable^a; as we are a law that cannot but sin, so he 'contra.' Now this holiness of Christ's person, or nature, is to a clean different end to what the gifts of the Spirit upon him were. His person was so holy, that he might perform the law, satisfy justice, pay obedience, conquer Satan. But the gifts of the Spirit were to fit him for Mediatorship, to cast out devils, to reveal the will of God, to work miracles to confirm that doctrine.

As these differ in their ends, so are they from different originals; holiness from the purity of his nature,—endowments, by extraordinary donation. If he had the Spirit in

^z 1 Thess. v. 23.

^a Rom. viii. 2.

extraordinary gifts of revelation and miracles, by virtue of his holy nature, why was that Spirit given so visibly^a, and given when he was to begin his mediation? Consider his own words, “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father^b.” Some are ashamed to confess their ignorance of any thing, yet he doth it plainly: for the divine nature in Christ acted not to the utmost of its power. It is clear, from this passage of Christ, that, by his nature, he had not the spirit of revelation, but he had it by the immediate gift of God. For it pleased not God so to reveal that day and hour to him, while he was here on earth. So that, by this example, you may see much more the fallacy of that argument, ‘I am a saint; therefore, I have the spirit of revelation.’ Whereas Christ himself could not say so.

II. The spirit of revelation is given indeed to saints, but means little that sense, that these men speak of, but is of a clean different nature.—The apostle prays, Ephes. i. 17, “That God would give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.” And God gives this spirit; but in what sense? Not, to foresee things to come; not to understand the grammatical construction of Scripture without study; not to preach by the Spirit: but the apostle explains himself, ver. 18: “The eyes of their understanding being enlightened; that ye may know, what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.” So that the revelation, given to the saints, is this,—that God reveals the experience of those things, that we have learned before in the theory from Scripture,—a saving feeling of ‘the hope of his calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance.’ Here let me speak three things:—

1. To feel the experience of grace, is not by new light, that was never known before, but by application of what was known before. As the queen of Sheba first heard of the fame of Solomon, then found by experience. Compare we our knowledge of spiritual things to a banquet, to your feast this day. A man, before grace, sees the banquet God hath provided for his people; hath, by the word, learned the nature and definition of faith, repentance, holiness, love of God, and love to God: but as yet he does but see the banquet;

^a Matt. iii.^b Mark, xiii. 32.

when grace comes, then he sees and tastes these things in experience and sense in his own soul. He had a light before from the word; now it is brought so near his heart, that he feels warmth, he feels life, and sense, and operation of these things; is, as it were, changed into these things; as in 2 Cor. iii. 18, "We with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." Now, this is not the spirit of revelation in that sense, that these take it in; but it is so called, because it is, by a light and operation, above natural light and operation. As common grace is called grace, because it is above the ordinary working of nature,—so this is called revelation, because above the work of common light.

2. How do men come to assurance of pardon and salvation? Not by the spirit of revelation in their sense; not by any immediate whispers from heaven; but another way: as in Rom. xv. 4, "Through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we have hope." In Scripture is your comfort, and in your own conscience; and in them is your assurance. A saint makes this holy syllogism:—

Scripture, major, 'He that repents, believes, loves God, hath the pardon of his sins.'

Conscience, minor, 'Lord, I believe; Lord, I love thee.'

Saint, from both, makes the conclusion, 'Therefore, I am assured of the pardon of my sins, and my salvation.'

Thus Christ would bring St. Peter to assurance of his estate after his denial, by this trial, 'Lovest thou me?' Not by any revelation that Christ loved him, but it was assurance enough, if he loved Christ. And here, by the way, let me speak one word for trial, whether we have the Spirit of sanctification, that we be not deceived in the rest. Never believe you have the Spirit of sanctification, unless your heart be changed to love God. Among many signs, this is the most sensible and undoubted. I say, 'unless the heart be changed, and changed to love God.' Change of heart is the mother-habit of all graces. God speaks enough in Ezek. xxxvi. 26; "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." In that question about perseverance and loss of grace, as in the case of David, Peter, &c; we say, 'That the act may be suspended, and lost for the present, but the habit not.' Now, by 'habit,' we mean not the particular seed of this or that grace, but the change of the

heart, the 'materia prima' of all graces. That is never unchanged back again: the stone is taken away. The heart, indeed, may freeze into ice, as David's and Peter's, but never turn into stone again.

I say farther, 'to love God.' A man may feel some kind of change of heart in common grace. Common grace is God's ordinary way for working saving grace; his keys, illumination, stirring of conscience, fear of hell, some kind of grief. Now, though these go not so far as to come to saving grace, yet saving grace comes not but by the inlet of these. And here many are deceived, if they have some such stirrings within them, if startled, pricked, have some sorrow for sin, though all from the spirit of bondage, yet think they have repentance, godly sorrow, enough. And here were an insuperable difficulty of discerning a man's estate, whether yet under common grace only, but that this resolves it, 'If I love God.' Peter's startling of conscience, grief, tears, were good signs, but never sure signs,—had not this seasoned all, 'Lord, I love thee.'

So, that a man's assurance of his happy estate, is not by any spirit of revelation, but of sanctification; not from inspiration, but from the work and testimony of a good conscience; the Spirit of God in grace bearing witness to our spirits.

3. I may add, A saint in heaven finds nothing, but what he knew before in little, what he tasted before in little, but then is filled.—As he hath heard, so now he seeth in the city of God: hath heard of the beatifical vision, of partaking of God, of eternity; now he enjoys it, not by any new revelation of the Spirit, but by blessed experience. So that the dearest saint of God, hath no farther promise of revelation, than in this sense.

III. There is no promise in Scripture, whereupon the spirit of revelation is to be expected after the fall of Jerusalem. It is a delusion, by which the men we speak of, deceive themselves and others, when they think and assert, that what promises are made of revelation, or of great light, are to be applied to these times. How have these places been, as it were, worn threadbare by them for this purpose, Isa. liv. 13; "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord:" and Jer. xxxi. 33, 34; "And this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the

Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts," &c. "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me," &c; and others; as if they had been directly aimed for these very times, and as if directly for England: whereas I say again, there is no promise, upon which the spirit of revelation is to be expected after the fall of Jerusalem. This assertion is more important and proveable, than seems at first sight. I limit prophecy to expire at the fall of Jerusalem. Whosoever saith not so, will not know where to limit it,—and what that age was, wherein it was extinguished. And if no limit, then how great is the danger we are in, who live in these times, when so many, of contrary minds, pretend to prophesy! and then, there were no age, but there would be some persons oracular as Moses. If any limit, then,—where is it fixed? I say, at the fall of Jerusalem. And I will prove it, by what they bring to prove prophecy for these days: Acts ii. 17; "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and their sons and their daughters shall prophesy," &c. By the 'last days,' they would understand it of the world,—I, of Jerusalem. So in divers places besides. That it is so to be understood in the place, St. Peter's application makes out; who applies this place of the Old Testament unto himself and the Christians at that time, upon occasion of their speaking strange languages. What absurdity would there otherwise be in his applying this place!

The old economy is as the old world; the evangelical, is the new heaven, and the new earth. So that the last days of the old world, are the last days of the old economy. Hence the destruction of Jerusalem is spoken of, as the destruction of the old world; and Christ's coming, is said to be in the 'last days.' So that if we take not 'the pouring out of the Spirit in the last days,' in that sense, we swerve from the sense of the phrase in Scripture. And hence it appears that the Spirit was to be in those last days, and that it was affixed to them from propriety of phrase.

To this we might add, the manner of imparting the Spirit in those times: it was either by effusion upon many together, Acts ii, and x,—or by imposition of hands upon some single ones. Now, who dares think, that, since the fall of Jerusalem, such manner of giving ever was, or ever will be?

And these are the only ways of imparting the Spirit, that are spoke of, since Christ ascended.

To all we might add, that, at the fall of Jerusalem, all Scripture was written, and God's full will revealed; so that there was no farther need of prophecy and revelation.

Therefore, those places they cite, are misapplied, both as to the time, and also as to the proper sense of them. So that here is a discovery of the third delusion,—that prophecy still continues; whereas it was to cease at the fall of Jerusalem; and there is no promise, whereupon any hath reason to expect it in these times.

IV. The standing ministry is the ordinary method, that God hath used for the instruction of his church.—It has ever been God's way, since he first wrote words, to teach his church by a studious learned ministry, who were to explain the Scripture by study, not by the Spirit. Mistake not: this ministry consisted not of prophets (they were occasional, and of necessity), but of priests and Levites. We are sent to them^w; “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Ask now the priests concerning the law:” “For the priests' lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts^x.” We have mention made of the sons of the prophets in the Old Testament; these were not inspired, but understanding was instilled into them by Elias, and they sat at his feet; such were those of Issachar. So the disciples sat at the feet of Christ. The true apostles, indeed, were inspired, because there was a necessity of it. But when the New Testament was written, there was no farther need of inspiration. And then the church was sufficiently instructed by ordinary ministers; therefore, was Timothy left at Ephesus,—Titus, in Crete: therefore, was the imposition of hands^y.

I conclude all, with that suitable advice of St. John^z, “Beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

^w Hag. ii. 11.

^x Mal. ii. 7.

^y Heb. vi. 2.

^z 1 Ep. iv. 1.

A SERMON^a,

PREACHED BEFORE

THE STAFFORDSHIRE-NATIVES,

AT

ST. MICHAEL'S, CORNHILL, LONDON,

NOVEMBER 26, 1663.

ROM. v. 1.

Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.

THIS text may seem very unsuitable to this occasion; but, certainly, to no occasion, no company, no season, can it be unsuitable, can it be unseasonable, to speak, hear, meditate, of the infinite mercy of God, in justifying men, and of the inexpressible happiness of man, in 'having peace with God.'

But I have chosen this subject to treat upon, in a methodical succession to what I have discoursed upon heretofore, being called to this employment: at my first, being upon this task before you, from those words in John x. 22, 23, which speak of Christ's being at Jerusalem at the feast of dedication, I showed you, at large, how our Saviour held communion with the church of the Jews; and thereupon I spake of such unity, against schism. At my second, from those words^b, "These are spots in your feasts of charity," I showed, that the 'spots' spoken of were false teachers, that went abroad pretending to the Spirit, and so deceiving; and thereupon I spake of taking heed of such delusions, against heresy and error. And now, what can I more orderly and methodically speak upon, after speaking of keeping peace with the church, and keeping peace with the truth, than of having peace with God?

'Yes (you will say), to have taken in, first, having peace one with another.' True, that might not have been immethodical. But you speak that in my stead; this loving,

^a English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1050.

^b Jude, ver. 12.

friendly, brotherly meeting, discourses that for me, and makes a visible sermon of your peace one with another. And I have made that, as it were, a text, whereupon to raise an occasional meditation to the tenor of that, which the text that I have read, speaks. And let me raise it thus: If it be so good, and pleasant, and happy, a thing, to see brethren thus live together in unity,—thus to meet together, to walk together, to feast together, in love, unity, and peace; ‘sursum corda,’ ‘lift up your hearts;’ and from this lustre you see of the sun shining in this water below, look up to the light that is in the body of the sun itself,—and meditate how excellent, how pleasant, how happy, a thing it is to have peace with God,—to walk in peace with God in his own ways,—to converse in peace with God in his own house,—to feast in peace with God at his own table,—and, at night, to lie down and sleep in peace with God in his own bosom.

This is the last Epistle, the apostle wrote before his apprehension and imprisonment. He wrote it from Corinth, where he touched in his journey to Jerusalem, his last journey thither. He wrote it in the second year of Nero, immediately after Easter, when Claudius, who had hindered the ‘mystery of iniquity,’ from its working in its full scope, by his discountenancing the Jewish nation, had now been taken away above a year and a half ago. And now that mystery did find itself loose, and acted in its full activity,—those of that nation, that had not embraced the gospel, persecuting it with all virulency, and multitudes of those that had embraced it, apostatizing from it, and becoming its bitter enemies.

This double fruit of gall and wormwood proceeded from one and the same root of bitterness,—viz. their doting upon Judaism: the word taken in a civil sense, as they accounted it a privilegial excellence to be a Jew; or in a religious sense, as they expected to be justified by their Judaical works.

So that the very season and present juncture of affairs, might very well give occasion unto the apostle, to handle the two themes, that faced these two great delusions, so copiously in this Epistle, above all other places,—viz. the casting off the Jews, and coming in of the Gentiles, to decry their boasting of being Jews; and justification by faith, to face their dangerous principle, of justification by their works.

How he prosecutes his discourse upon the point of justification by faith, from the beginning of his Epistle hither, any one may see plainly; first, confuting the opinion concerning justification by works, and then proving that it is by faith.

As to the former, in chap. i, he speaks of the works of the heathen, most abominable, and clean contrary to justifying. In chap. ii, of the works of the Jews, most failing, and infinitely short of justifying; and yet concludes, as to the second head he handles, that the believers of the one nation and the other are justified, chap. iii. 30, as well the circumcision ἐκ πίστεως, 'by faith,' and not by works, as the uncircumcision διὰ πίστεως, 'through faith,' though it had been of so contrary works.

In chap. iv, he instanceth in Abraham, as serving to both his purposes, showing that he was not justified by his works, but by believing; and that the rather, because it was a common opinion and saying among the Jews, אברהם קיים את כל התורה כולה 'That Abraham performed all the law to a tittle;' and, consequently, that he was justified by that performance. He showeth, that he believed, and was justified by his faith, before he received circumcision, in which they placed so much of justification; and that he received circumcision σφραγίδα τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ, "a seal of the righteousness of faith, which he had, being yet uncircumcised," and a seal of the righteousness of faith, which should be in the uncircumcision, or Gentiles, that should come to believe (as those words will also bear), 'that he might be the father of all that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,' ver. 11.

In this verse before us, he begins to apply the doctrine he had cleared, and the word, 'therefore,' infers no less. Upon which I shall not insist to examine, whether by it he infers only the first clause of the text, as proved already, 'That justification is by faith;' or, the second also, as proved likewise, or now added to be proved, 'That, being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' Nor shall I insist upon the connexion, but take the words as they lie singly before us; and, methinks, they are as Ephraim and Manasseh before Jacob; both clauses so excellent, that we may be at a stand, on which to lay the 'right hand;' so great

the mystery of 'justification,' and so incomparable the happiness of having 'peace,' that on which shall we fix to discourse in this hour? I may not pass the former; but, in a word or two by the way, hint something of the great mystery of 'justification.'

I. It is a mystery and wonder, that, I may say with that apostle, even the angels desire to look into,—and that men have cause, with amazement, to look upon, that ever a sinful wretch, a condemned person, should be justified before God. But so it was in the law,—he that was unclean with the deepest-dyed legal uncleanness that could be, if purified with the purification of the sanctuary, he became clean.

II. It is a mystery, that a sinner should be justified, and yet, while he lives in this world, he is sinful still. But so, likewise, it was in the law,—the leper was cleansed, yet he was a leper still^b. In a case there mentioned, the priest was to pronounce him clean. His condition was changed, as to his restoring to the public worship, and to the congregation; but his inherent distemper was not wholly removed.

III. It is a mystery, that a sinner should be justified by God's justice, the property of which is to condemn sin, and to punish sinners. For we are justified, not only by the grace and mercy of God, but by the very justice of God. And, methinks, the very word 'justification' speaks no less,—I am sure the apostle speaks so in chap. i. 17: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." In the law, was revealed the righteousness or justice of God condemning,—and in the gospel, the righteousness or justice of God justifying.

IV. It is a mystery, that man's believing should justify; it being an act of man, and so infinitely inadequate to God's justifying. But, as in the law, he that would have his atonement made at the altar, and have his acceptance there, must, of necessity, take the priest in his thoughts, and, in his way, to do it for him; so faith doth inevitably include, also, Christ, the object of believing, and his merit. So that you cannot define this gospel-faith, but with this comprehension,—that it is a trusting in the grace and promise of God through Christ.

V. It is a mystery, that a sinner should be justified, or made righteous, by the righteousness of another. This is

^b Levit. xiii. 13.

strange to the ears of the Jews, who expected to be justified, every one by his own righteousness. Whereas they might have learned at the temple, that, even the holiest things there, were not holy of themselves, but made holy by something else;—the sacrifice by the altar, the priest by his garments. And this is that faith that the apostle speaks of in the place mentioned before, “The righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith^c,” i. e. a righteousness beyond that, that the Jew expected by faith in God, who immediately trusted in God upon the account of his own righteousness; whereas this is a faith, or trusting in God, upon the righteousness of Christ.

VI. It is a mystery, that, whereas faith is not the same for degree and measure in all that believe, yet justification is the same in all that believe, though their belief be in different measures and degrees. So once in the wilderness, all gathered not manna in the same measure; yet, when all came to measure, they had all alike, none above an omer, none under. Sanctification, indeed, receiveth ‘magis et minus,’ and one hath a greater degree, or less, of holiness, than another,—but justification is not so; for, all are justified alike, the truth of faith justifying, not the measure. So actual sinfulness ‘recipit magis et minus,’ and so some are greater sinners, some less; but, ‘origine sui,’ it is not so, but sin is alike in all.

But my discourse shall light down and stay upon that, which, in the text, is the lighting down of the happiness of being justified,—viz. “That such have peace with God.”

The very word, ‘to have peace with God,’ may make a Christian’s heart to leap within him,—it speaks so much happiness. “Did not our hearts burn within us?” say they in the gospel, upon Christ’s gracious discourses with them. It is enough to warm a heart,—if it be not, if it will not be, a stone; if it be sensible, if it will be sensible, what it is to be a sinner;—to hear that an offended, just, dreadful, all-powerful God, will be at peace with him, that hath offended him.

Why art thou so dull, O my soul, why so stupid within me, as not to stir, not to be affected, at the sounding of such tidings as these, That it is possible for a sinner to have peace with God? Cain, why art thou so unquiet in thy conscience? If thou do well, shalt thou not be accepted? but if thou do

^c Rom. i. 17.

not, 'there is a sin-offering lies at the door,' and thou mayest have an atonement. Wretch that thou art, if thy heart relent not at such tidings as these!

When the devil had set enmity betwixt God and man at the fall of Adam, it was a lovely dawning towards man's recovery, when God set enmity betwixt man and the devil, for their friendship had been man's undoing. But it was the glorious sun-rising, or noontide rather, when God abolished the enmity betwixt man and himself, and brought and spake peace.

In the angels' song, that they sung at the birth of our Saviour, that part of the ditty spake a great deal of happiness, that spake of 'peace on earth' betwixt man and man; which was now to be by reconciling Jew and Gentile in the gospel; but that part of it spake more happiness, that spake of *εὐδοκία ἐν ἀνθρώποις*, 'God's good-will towards men,' or peace betwixt men and God.

Now, what it is to have peace with God, who can utter? It is a fit theme for an angel from heaven to discourse upon, who never had enmity with God,—or, rather, for a saint in glory, who had once been at enmity, but now knows what the sweetness of peace with God is in its full enjoyment. Take the prospect of it thus reflexly. Take your stand in your thoughts from a death-bed,—a very convenient stand to take our view in all our actions. Think of your dying condition, and conceive all your sins then mustered before you; the vanity, folly, and wretchedness, of an ill-led life presenting themselves before you in their horror and confusion,—your conscience flashing the very flames of hell into your faces: imagine that you beheld God frowning, and his face full of indignation: in a word, that you saw plainly your lost and undone condition,—and then speak, heart, what is it to have peace with God? Solomon, wilt thou have riches? Sinner, wilt thou have preferments, wealth, pleasure, all contents the world can afford?—No, Lord, let me have peace with God, which is above ten thousand worlds.

It is very incident to any, that treateth upon this subject, to be carried, by a kind of delightful impulse and enforcement, to discourse what happiness it is to have peace with God. And no wonder, when the field is very pleasant to spaiate in: but I shall, according to the proper rule of method, first, inquire into the nature of the thing itself,—and then, if time permit, speak of that happy fruit of it.

Of the former of these I shall discourse negatively and positively.

I. Negatively, what is not this peace, nor any sign of it; but is counterfeit coin. And

1. Outward peace, or prosperity in the things of this world, is no sign at all of peace with God.—The men of the world are willing to delude themselves with this sophism, ‘All things go well with me; therefore, it is so between God and me.’ It is true, outward prosperity, in Scripture-phrases, is often termed by the name of ‘peace;’ and it is true, also, that outward prosperity is often promised upon pleasing God, in obedience to his commandments; as in Levit. xxvi, and Deut. xxviii, and in multitudes of other places. And hence some may be ready, upon the enjoyment of worldly prosperity, to think they may conclude upon the favour of God, and that they are at peace with him, and all well betwixt God and them.

But that promise of the covenant, is to be interpreted according to the tenor of the covenant itself; which is, that it is absolutely a covenant of grace and peace, but it is conditionally the covenant of somewhat else,—viz. of temporal things. In 1 Tim. iv. 8, “Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come:” of the life to come, absolutely,—of this, conditionally. God’s covenant is, that they that keep his covenant, shall have grace; that is absolute: and it may be prosperity, it may be adversity; that is conditional.—But this *may be* spoils all.—By no means. Thou shalt have prosperity, if best; thou shalt have adversity, if best: riches, if good for thee; prosperity, if better.

And in that question, whether wicked men have right to the creature, the determination is made more easy, this being observed, that there is a great deal of difference betwixt a right to the creature, and a covenant-right, which is, that the use of the creature be for our good. For “*Dominium temporale non fundatur in gratia.*” It is not grace that gives interest to the use of the creature, but to the blessing on the creature; “The creature is sanctified by the word of God and prayer^g.” The matter is not, whether we have the use of the creature, but whether the creature be sanctified, and becomes a blessing. God hath promised, “keep my

^g 1 Tim. iv. 5.

covenant, and be blessed in thy basket and thy store," &c; and yet thousands have kept God's covenant, and walked hungry and naked; as in Heb. xi. 36, 37. These good men, if they had not well understood the tenor of the covenant of grace, might have disputed with God, "Thou hast promised to them, that keep thy covenant, that they shall be so and so blessed: we have done it; but where is the promise?" As they plead^h, "Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat, &c. All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant." But, saith God, and they knew it well, 'The tenor of the covenant absolutely is grace; and *that* you have; but other things are but conditional,—viz. as they may be best for you.'

Let no man, then, deceive himself; seek not the living among the dead. A full bag, and chest, and barn, is a very improper place to seek for the peace of God in. A man's outward condition is not a sign of his interest in the covenant of grace and peace: but if that condition will be a blessing to him, and will forward and help him on the better to grace and peace, the end of the covenant,—then he shall have it. A man, prosperous in the world, grows proud, secure, insulting. Is this covenant-prosperity? No, it is clean contrary to the end of the covenant, which is the forwarding men in grace. So that I may wind my assertion higher,—That outward peace and plenty is so little a sign of peace with God, that it is oftentimes a sign rather of his enmity.—See Eccles. v. 13: there riches are said "to be kept for the owners thereof to their hurt." And Mal. ii. 2; there God threatens "to curse these blessings." But I need say no more upon this point, but only to mention, that our Saviour sets his peace, and this peace of the world, in oppositionⁱ.

2. There is another false coin, that counterfeits peace with God, and that is 'men's having peace in their own consciences.'—I shall discover how deceiveable it is, by speaking to this second assertion:

That inward peace, in the conscience, doth not at all infer having peace with God.—And let me add a third, and speak reversely:

That having peace with God doth not necessarily infer inward peace of conscience.

^h Psal. xliv. 11. 17.

ⁱ John, xiv. 27.

1. That inward peace, in the conscience, doth not infer having peace with God.—By ‘inward peace in the conscience’ I mean the opposite to pangs, troubles, storms of conscience. And this peace is the common temper of the most consciences in the world; they have no disquiet at all. Who hath used to visit the sick on their dying beds,—hath he not found it too common, that conscience hath been in this temper? ‘I thank God, nothing troubles me; all is quiet in my conscience.’—As Elisha over Hazael, upon foresight of his mischievousness to come,—so could I weep over such a poor soul, to see it go out of the world with such a delusion as this in its right hand.

Ah! say not ‘Peace, peace,’ when there is no peace. For here, indeed, is neither peace with God, nor peace of conscience, properly so called. But if you will have the Spirit of God to word it, it is the “spirit of slumber^j,” it is an “impenitent heart^k,” it is ἀπηλγηκώς, “past feeling^j,” in a word, it is a Nabal’s heart, dead within him. And that such a conscience should be quiet, it is no wonder; for “mortui non mordent.” But it would be a wonder, if such a peace, in the conscience, should be a sign of peace with God. Into such a peace, let not my soul, my conscience, enter.

It was a strange request of him, that said to his father, “Smite me, I pray thee.” But I hardly know a more pertinent request, that a sinner can put up to God, and it must be mine continually; and I know, that all that know what belong to the right frame of conscience, will pray with me, “Lord, smite me, I pray thee; wound me, lash my conscience, and spare it not, rather than suffer me to lie and die, and perish under such peace of conscience as this is;” if such stupidity may be called peace.

Doth any one, by such a peace of conscience as this, argue his peace with God? I must now also wind this assertion higher, as I did the former:—It is so far from inferring peace with God, that it directly argues peace with the devil. And our Saviour, the God of truth, and the Prince of peace, bears witness to it^m.

2. But doth not peace with God, argue or infer peace of conscience? That is the second thing I should speak to. And here I could insist with delight; for it is a very material case of conscience.

^j Rom. xi. 8.

^k Rom. ii. 5.

^l Eph. iv. 19.

^m Luke, xi. 21.

It is a mystery in divinity and experience, that an unregenerate person can hardly be driven off from presuming on his salvation, and that a regenerate man can hardly be brought to hope of his salvation:—that he who is farthest from having peace with God, should scarcely be driven from not doubting of his peace with him,—and that he that undoubtedly hath his peace with him, should so hardly be driven off from doubting it. Many a good soul is in the world that is justified, and hath, without question, ‘quoad rem ipsam,’ his peace with God, according to the divine oracle of the text;—and yet is, as to the sense of it, exceeding far from peace of conscience; full of troubles and fears at all times.

Think you not David was justified, and that his peace was made with God? Who can doubt it? And yet you have him “sore brokenⁿ.” Think you not, that he that penned the seventy-seventh Psalm, was justified, and had peace with God, be he David or Asaph? Who can doubt it? And yet you have his “sore running,” &c. ver. 2. Was not he that composed the eighty-eighth Psalm, justified and had peace with God? It is past all question; and yet you have him sadly bemoaning, at ver. 15, 16, that, from his youth up, all his life, he was so terrified in conscience, that he was even distracted,—and that he felt the fierce wrath of God go over him, and his terrors cutting him off.

But let my lot be with such mourners of Zion; let me have such breakings of heart, whilst others delight to be secure. Let me be in tears, and such trembling of conscience, as these men were: and those that delight in having no trouble here, let them take it to themselves.

If this case were inconsistent with having peace with God, then were such a condition, of all men’s, most miserable; but it is so far from being inconsistent, that it is the common and constant condition of all, that obtain peace with him, though it be not alike to all, and in the same degree. It may seem as ‘snow in harvest’ to speak of a mourning, afflicted, grieved conscience, at a feast of mirth; but to show that yet such an unquiet soul may be, for all that, at peace with God, will make the case like that at the laying the foundation of the new temple, in Ezra^o, that the sound of rejoicing may drown that of weeping.

ⁿ Psal. xxxviii. 8.

^o Chap. iii.

I could gladly and delightfully, as I said, speak to this case,—and show, for the comfort of such afflicted consciences, how little their case doth deny having peace with God: how comfortable such a condition is, though it be bitter also. I might clear the state and nature of such men's condition, partly, by observing under what predicament such a case comes in the covenant of grace: partly, by observing the quality of such trouble, and how clear it is from being sinful: partly, by observing the extent of the ability of conscience to judge of a man's estate: partly, by observing the proper original, from whence it ariseth in the soul itself: partly, by observing the purpose of God in stating conscience in such a condition. By every one of which might be evinced, that conscience may be at miserable trouble within itself, and yet that person at most entire peace with God: that his peace with God may be most undoubtedly sure, when his conscience doth most doubt of it.

But these would require the hour to begin again, to have time to speak to them. And, indeed, it may seem as mourning at a banquet of wine, to speak of an afflicted conscience at a feast of rejoicing.

II. And, therefore, having thus spoke to the negative, I shall come to the positive, and show what it is to have peace, having showed what it is not. But where shall I begin, and where end? First, A discourse of this subject must begin at the suburbs of hell, enmity with God,—and end in the highest heaven, the full enjoyment of him in glory. Secondly, It must proceed to show the original of this enmity, from the disjunction of sinful nature, from the holy nature of God, and from disobedience of life and will to the divine will and law. And now, thirdly, It comes to Jerusalem, the vision of peace. The thing, itself, what it is, we may take up in two considerations briefly:—

1. It is a laying away, and extinguishing of God's hatred and enmity against a sinner.

2. It is not only privatively, the laying aside the wrath of God,—but positively, the flowing in of the love of God. Moses prays to God, 'Lord, show me thy glory.' Oh! what a sight is it, when the cloud of unbelief is over! how lovely and sweetly does the Sun of righteousness arise upon us!

But I give not the whole definition of peace with God, unless, to God reconciled to man, I add, man reconciled to

God. We may observe, how the Holy Ghost expresses the great reconciliation: the main stress lies in the reconciliation of man to God, Col. i. 20; "God, through the blood of the cross, hath reconciled all things to himself." He saith not, "hath reconciled *himself* to all things, but *all things* to himself." And in 2 Cor. v. 19, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." He saith not, reconciling *himself* unto the world. And ver. 20, "We pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God." The great business is, for man to be reconciled unto God; Absalom unto David. Here, then, is the main trial, to know whether God be at peace with you; see if you be at peace with him. This is the note in the index; and if we find it there, we may be sure to find the other in the book. As he that looked westward, for the rising of the sun, saw it sooner, gilding the tops of the mountains, than they that looked for it in the east; so this is the best way to see, whether God be at peace with us: let us look back upon ourselves, and see how our condition is towards God. Some hold, that the answer by Urim and Thummim was by the rising of the stones in the high-priest's breast-plate. Though I am not of their mind, yet I may allude unto it in the case in hand; look into thine own breast, make thine observation thence, see how thy heart stands affected towards God: and by that thou mayest understand, what God's answer to thy question is,—viz. whether he be at peace with thee?

A SERMON^a,

PREACHED AT

HERTFORD ASSIZE,

MARCH, 1660.

REV. XX. 4.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them; and judgment was given unto them.

THIS portion of Scripture, out of which I have taken this text, is as much misconstrued, and as dangerously misconstrued, as any one portion of Scripture in all the Bible. How much, I shall show you in the unfolding of it: and how dangerously, you may read in the late example, of a handful of unhappy men, who thought to have brought our great city, but indeed brought themselves, to a fatal end and untimely grave, merely upon the misconstruction of this Scripture.

I must therefore, humbly crave your patience a little, whilst I speak something for the discovery of the meaning of the context, that so I may facilitate and plain the way to the understanding of the meaning of the words, that I have chosen.

What work the millenary and fifth monarchists make upon this place, I need not tell you; I would that matter were not so well known as it is. To whom, and to whose opinion, I must do, as he did in the story; who, when a great company of men were met together, and wanted a head over them,—and had agreed that he should be their chief, that could first espy the sun rising the next morning; whilst all the rest stood gazing unto the east for that purpose, one among them turned the clear contrary way, and looked westward; and he espied the shining of the sun, on the hill-tops before him, sooner than they could espy the body of the sun arising in the east before them. So I to these men and their opinion. They look forward and make account,

^a English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1056.

that the things, that are here spoken of their accomplishment and fulfilling, are yet to come. I look backward, and fear not to aver, that the things, here spoken of, have received their accomplishment long ago. They look forward, and expect that the thousand years, that are here mentioned, are yet to begin: I look backward, and make no doubt, that those thousand years ended and expired above half a thousand years since.

And the reason of this difference between us is, because there is proportionable difference between us about ‘*subjectum quæstionis*,’ the subject and matter that the Apocalyptic here aimeth at.

He speaks up that great and noble theme, that all the prophets so divinely and comfortably harp upon,—namely, The calling of the Gentiles: that they should come in, out of their dark and deluded estate, to the light and embracing of the gospel, and to become the church and people of the living God: this is the theme of our Apocalyptic here, and he speaks to it in seven particulars.

I. As to the way and manner that God used to bring them in: that “Christ, the great angel of the covenant,” should, by the power of the gospel, chain up the devil, that he should deceive them no more, as he had done.

The mistakers I mentioned, do, either ignorantly or wilfully, err about the subject handled here; and construe it to this sense,—that the devil should be bound by Christ, that he should not persecute, disturb, and disquiet, the church, as he had done: but that, all along these thousand years, there should be only some time of peace and tranquillity, and not one cloud of disquieture or disturbance by the devil or his instruments eclipse it. A sense as far from the Holy Ghost’s meaning, as the east is from the west.

There is not a word here of the devil’s binding, that he should not disturb the church; but of the devil’s binding, that “he should not deceive the nations:” *ἵνα μὴ πλανήσῃ τὰ ἔθνη ἔτι* let a Grecian read the words, and he will render them, that “he should not deceive the heathen any more.” The devil had deceived and kept the poor heathen in deludedness, by idols, oracles, false miracles, horrid mysteries of irreligiousness, and a thousand cozenages, for above two thousand years; namely, from their first casting off at the confusion of Babel, till the gospel was brought in among

them by the apostles. By the gospel there, Christ dissolves those charms of delusion, brings down idolatry, silences the devil's oracles and miracles, and chains up the devil from that power and liberty of deceiving all nations, as he had done.

II. He saith, 'the devil was chained up, in this sense, a thousand years:' using a known expression of the Jews, and alluding to an opinion of theirs; partly, that he might speak the more to be understood, when he useth an expression so well known,—and partly, that he might face the mistake of the Jews in that opinion.

It was their conceit and fancy, as I might show you out of their writings, that Messias, when he should come, should reign among the Jewish nation a thousand years; but as for the heathen, he should destroy them.

No, saith our Apocalyptic; his reigning a thousand years shall be among the nations, or the Gentiles, and he shall not come to destroy the Gentiles, but to deliver them: to deliver them from the power and delusions of Satan, to chain up Satan that he shall deceive them no more as he had done: but that whereas before, for so long a time together, they had been only taught of the devil; now they should all be taught of God, as had been foretold, Isa. liv. 13, and as our Saviour himself applies it, John vi. 45.

III. He speaks of Christ's disposal of the heathen, when he should have brought them in from under the deceivings of the devil, to the knowledge and embracing of the gospel,—viz. that he would platform them into kingdoms, states, and civil governments, and that he would set up Christian kings, and magistrates, and judges, among them; and that is the meaning of the words of the text, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them:" as I shall show to you by and by.

IV. He relates, 'That the souls of those, that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, nor had worshipped the beast nor his image, &c, should live and reign with Christ a thousand years.'

Where he faceth another erroneous opinion of the Jews again: which was, that the kingdom of Messias should be a pompous kingdom, and of earthly splendour and glory; and that those that should reign with him, should do it in the enjoyment of all earthly magnificence and worldly state.

No, saith our Apocalyptic; they that suffer with him, are those, that shall reign with him: as also saith the apostle, 2 Tim. ii. 12; that howsoever he shall set up kings and magistrates to rule for him, and under him, yet his kingdom is not of this world; but the way to reign with him, is by suffering, self-denial, enduring for him, dying for him.

V. He calls this calling in of the Gentiles, ‘the first resurrection,’ ver. 5. And a wondrous one too: when they that had so long lain dead in darkness, trespasses, and sins, should now be revived to live unto God^o: and our Saviour useth the very same expression of the same persons^p.

VI. He telleth, that ‘some of those dead should not live again, till the thousand years should be fulfilled,’ ver. 5. Not that they should live again, when the thousand years should be fulfilled; but that they had lost the opportunity of living in those thousand years, when light and life was offered and tendered through the world. For,

VII. ‘When those thousand years should be expired, Satan should be loosed again, and deceive the world as he had done,’ ver. 7, 8.

And if you begin to count the thousand years from the time that the gospel was first brought in among the Gentiles by Paul and Barnabas, and other of the apostles,—you will find, that the end and expiring of them will fall to be in the very depth and thickness of Popery: and then was the devil got loose again, and deceived the nations by as gross and wretched delusions, as ever he had done before.

And thus you have a brief account of the meaning of this portion of Scripture, so much mistaken and misconstrued: and by this time you see, that the meaning of my text is, as I gave it you before,—namely, that in the church of the Gentiles called in, God should set up thrones, and kings, and magistrates,—and put judgment into their hands, to govern and judge the world, and to administer justice.

So that they, that, from this place, would argue against magistracy and civil government in the Christian church, do no less mistake, than they did these words of God in the prophet Jeremiah^q; who, when God told them, that “every bottle should be filled with wine,” and his meaning was, that ‘every person should be filled with his indignation,’ as it is explained in the next verse;—they so far mis-

^o As Ephes. ii. 1.

^p John, v. 25.

^q Jer. xiii. 12.

construed, that they answer, "We certainly know, that every bottle shall be filled with wine:" meaning bottles in the proper sense, and that they should be filled with good liquor, to maintain them still in their luxury and joviality. So the mistakes we spake of, would, from this Scripture, argue against magistrates and the civil power: whereas, there is hardly a place of Scripture, that speaks more home and thoroughly for it than this doth.

And this I shall farther clear to you, partly, out of the words of the text themselves,—and partly, from two other places, that speak the same thing.

In the text it is said, "Judgment was given unto them;" what can this mean, but power and authority to be magistrates and judges? 'Yes (say our mistakers); it means that the saints, at the day of judgment, shall sit upon seats with Christ, approving and applauding his judgment.' And they misapply other Scriptures as much for the confirmation of this, as they do this to such a construction. And those are Matt. xix. 28, Luke xxii. 30, which speak one and the same thing: where Christ speaks not at all of the saints judging the world, in such a sense as they feign to themselves, but only the twelve apostles [and Judas, if you well observe the places, to be reckoned for one] judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And the meaning is but this,—that 'when Christ should come to reveal himself, in his glorious appearing in vengeance, against Jerusalem and the Jewish nation,—the doctrine that they had preached, should condemn the twelve tribes, that had not believed it, as if they themselves sat on the thrones to judge and condemn them.' And so some of the ancients have, of old, well understood it, that it is not spoken of their persons, but of their doctrine, judging and condemning.

And to the true sense, that I say the text speaketh, speaketh also that equally abused place, 1 Cor. vi. 2: "Do ye not know, that the saints shall judge the world?" i. e. 'know ye not, that there shall be a Christian magistracy? that Christians shall be kings and magistrates, to rule and judge the world?'

And the very same sense speaketh Dan. vii. 18. 26, 27; from whence both my text and that passage of Paul are taken; "Know ye not (saith he), that the saints shall judge the world?" How should they know it? Why, plainly enough out of that place in Daniel, where, in ver. 18, it is

foretold, that “the saints of the Most High should take the kingdom; and possess the kingdom for ever and ever.” And, in ver. 26, 27; “The judgment shall sit (as in the text), and the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, should be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.”

Two considerations will put the matter out of all question.

I. That the word ‘saints,’ means not strictly nor really sanctified, in opposition to men ‘not really sanctified,’ but it means ‘Christians in general,’ in opposition to ‘heathens.’ And so the apostle himself clears it in the verse before that I cited: “Dare any of you go to law before the unjust and not before the saints?” What is meant by the ‘unjust’ there? ‘Heathens,’ or ‘infidels,’ as he calls them, ver. 6. And then, what is meant by ‘saints?’ but ‘Christians’ in opposition to ‘heathens.’

II. Observe the tenor of the contents in Daniel, and that will illustrate the sense of these verses that I produced. He speaks before of the four heathen monarchies, the Babylonian, Mede-Persian, Grecian, and Syro-grecian, that had had the kingdom, and dominion, and rule in the world, and had tyrannized in the world, especially against the church that was then in being: but at last they should be destroyed; and, upon their being destroyed, Christ should come and set up his kingdom through the world; and then the kingdom, and rule, and dominion in the world, should be put into the hands of saints or Christians, and they should rule and judge in the world, as those heathen monarchies had done all the time before.

And thus you have the words unfolded to you, and I hope according to the meaning of the Holy Ghost.

And now, my Lords and Gentlemen, you may see your own picture in the glass of the text; for you are of the number of those, of whom it speaketh. In it you may see yourselves, imbenched, commissioned, and your work put into your hands.

In the first clause, the institution of the function, the ordaining of magistracy and judicature: ‘I saw thrones set.’—In the second, the commissionating of Christians unto that office and function, ‘They sat upon them.’—In the last, the end of this office, and the employment they are set upon in it, ‘Judgment was given unto them.’

'Thrones set:—by whom? By him that had been the great agent in the verse before, Christ, that had bound the devil and chained him up.

'*They* sat upon them:—who? They that are the persons mentioned in the verse before. Men of the nations, undeceived from the delusions of Satan, and brought into the truth of the gospel.

'Judgment was given them:—for what end? For judgment's sake, that they might execute judgment and righteousness among the nations.

And so I have my words fairly cut out before me; and the matter and the method of the text call upon me to speak unto these three things:—

I. Of the institution of magistrates, as an ordinance of Christ.

II. Of Christian magistracy, as a gospel-mercy.

III. The great work, the all-in-all of magistracy, the execution of judgment.

I. Of all the offices of Christ, he executed only one of them peculiarly and reservedly himself, without the communicating of any acting in it to any other; but, as to the execution of the other two, he, partly, acteth himself,—and, partly, imparteth some acting therein, by deputation, to others.

His priestly office, that that most concerned, and had the greatest stroke in, man's redemption, he executed entirely himself; and no other had share, no other could have share, in the executing of that with him.

None could be capable of offering any of his all-sufficient sacrifice with him:—none could be capable of offering the incense of mediation with him; but, in his kingly and prophetic offices, he acteth himself, and he deputeth others to act for him.

As the great Prophet, he teacheth his church himself, by giving of the Scriptures, and instructing his holy ones by his Spirit; yet, withal, hath he deputed ministers to be her teachers.

And, as the great King of the church, and of all the world, he ruleth in both himself; in the hearts of his people, by his word and Spirit,—and amongst his enemies, with a rod of iron; yet, withal, hath he deputed kings, judges, and magistrates, to be rulers for him.

These two great ordinances you have couched in this

very place. In the verse before the text, Christ chaineth up the devil, that he should no more deceive poor men, as he had done before. And how did he this? By the ministry of the word, and preaching of the gospel. And, in the words of the text, he setteth up thrones, and sets men upon them; for what? To execute magistracy, and to administer judgment.

And so, likewise, are they closely hinted in that place of the apostle that I cited, 1 Cor. vi. 2; "Know ye not, that the saints shall judge the world," or, 'Christians be magistrates?' And, in the next verse following, "Know ye not, that we shall judge angels;" or, 'we apostles and ministers judge devils and overthrow their idols, oracles, miracles, and delusions, by the ministry of the gospel?'

And so, if I should take "pastors and teachers," Ephes. iv. 11, for magistrates and ministers, I believe, there were no solecism in the thing; and, I am sure, the Jews called their chiefest magistrates פֶּרָשִׁים 'pastors,' in their common speech. And, if the apostle may be showed there to speak in their vulgar dialect, as he doth indeed all along his Epistles, it would save a controversy and question, that is raised upon that place.

These two functions are the two standing pillars and ordinances, the Jachin and Boaz, that our great Solomon hath set up in his temple, to stand with the temple, while it standeth.

These are two choice strainings and distillings of the precious ointment, that was poured on the head of our great Aaron, that runs down upon the skirts of his clothing.

Yours, my Lords and Gentlemen, is a beam of that lustre, that shineth in the royal crown of Christ's kingly office. It is a coin, stamped with the image and superscription of the great Cæsar of heaven and earth, sitting in his empire and dominion over all.

I remember a phrase of Pliny, in his Epistles, speaking of a virtuous and gallant daughter, that imitated, to the life, the virtues and gallantry of a noble father, "*Filia patrem exscripserat*," "the daughter had copied out her father to the life." Magistracy is a daughter of that royal Father, that said, "All power is given to me in heaven and earth;" and, it is a copy of her Father. He, himself, hath drawn his own picture in it in little, as he sitteth in his royal domination, and given that image of himself to you, to wear always about you.

Let me, therefore, only tell you the story of a king, that always wore his father's picture, who had been a worthy prince, about him; and, ever and anon would look on it, and say, "*Ne quid unquam faciam indignum tali patre,*" "O may I never do any thing unworthy such a father!" Your wisdom and worth will make the application.

A good magistrate hath one part of the image of Christ more than other good men. As Adam's dominion over the creatures, was part of the image of God upon him, as well as holiness and righteousness was the image of God in him,—so is his power and commission to rule kingdoms in the world, the very image of Christ ruling and judging, if righteousness and holiness be added; and Adam, in all his glory, was not arrayed like such a person.

I am unwilling to insist, and spend time to prove, that magistracy is Christ's ordinance,—lest I speak but as he did at Rome, who had written a large discourse in praise of Hercules: he was but jeered for his pains and folly, to go about so seriously to commend Hercules; whom none, say they, did ever discommend. What sober man does or can deny, kingship and magistracy to be of Christ's ordaining? And I am unwilling, by being urgent in the proof of it, so much as to seem to undervalue the judgment of any in the congregation so far, as to think, this great and important truth needs any proof to him.

Only, let me say this, to those that do deny it, that it is a very strange logic they make, when they conclude thus, 'Jesus is king Jesus, and he is lord and ruler of all; therefore, he will endure no kingship else, no potentates, no civil government.' "Thou thoughtest me like unto thyself," is the complaint of God against the profane, in Psal. l. 21. Men that would rule, and would have none to rule but themselves, would persuade you Christ is of that mind; and so make that persuasion a stalking-horse to their ambition.

I am sure, God himself concludes after another manner in the second Psalm; "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Sion:"—what infers he thereupon? Not, 'Therefore, O ye kings, give up your kingship;' nor, 'O ye judges of the earth, judge the earth no more:' but, 'Therefore, be wise, O ye kings, &c. and do your duty in your places.'

When our Saviour, Christ, came to set up his kingdom of the gospel,—as, among the Jews, he took away and abolished

only that of their laws and ordinances that were ceremonial, and that that related only to them as peculiar people ; but let that stand that was moral, and that that was not of that peculiar relation ;—so, among the Gentiles, when he made them his church, he took away and destroyed only that, that was sinful and abominable among them, and which did most properly denominate them heathenish, as strangers and enemies to all goodness and religion ; but that, that was innocent, useful, and necessary, he perpetuated among them.

Among the Jews, he abolished the worship at the temple, as purely ceremonious ; but he perpetuated the worship of the synagogue, reading the Scriptures, praying, preaching, and singing of psalms, &c. transplanted them into the Christian church, as purely moral. So, among the Gentiles, he destroyed their ignorance, idolatry, corruption of manners, delusions of Satan, as purely heathenish ; but he perpetuated kingship, magistracy, civil government, as useful and profitable, and taken up upon the very pure light of nature and inevitable necessity.

I may compare what he did in this, to what he did about baptism. He found, when he came, that it had been in use among the Jews, for admission of proselytes to their church, many hundred of years before he himself, or John Baptist, was born ; and hence he was not solicitous to give rules, what persons and ages were to be baptized, nor in what manner now ; for that was known both then and many generations before he came, as well as we know it now ; but he took up baptism, as he found it continued in the Christian church ; only, he enhanced the dignity of it by sanctionating it for a gospel-sacrament.

So, when he came among the Gentiles, he found that magistracy and civil government had been among them in all generations ; and he takes it up as he found it, and continues it in the Christian church ; only, he enhanced the dignity of it, in sanctionating it now for a gospel-ordinance ; and, I must add, for a gospel-mercy.

II. And that is it, that I observe from the second clause in the text, “ They sat upon them.” A Christian magistracy is a gospel-mercy. Christian kings are enthroned, and Christian magistrates are empowered, for a mercy unto Christians. The context, for several verses together, speaks

of several things, as gospel-mercies ; and my text, coming in the midst of them, speaks of that, that is of the same nature and qualification.

It was a gospel-mercy, that the devil was chained up, that he should deceive the nations no more, as he had done in the verse before the text.

It is a gospel-mercy, that those that suffer for Christ, and die for Christ, are not lost, but reign with him in glory, in this same verse with the text.

It was a gospel-mercy, that the heathen, that had been so long dead in ignorance and all manner of sinfulness, should have a resurrection, and come to the life of grace and glory ; in the fifth verse.

And it is a gospel-mercy, in the text, that Christians are set up to be kings, rulers, and judges, among Christians.

We need not go far for proof of this ; for the flourishing condition of England, both in church and state, under such government and governors, gives evidence and example sufficient in this case. And ‘vox populi,’ the universal joy and acclamations of all the nation upon the happy restoring of his sacred Majesty, speaks the sense and attestation of the whole nation, nay, of the three nations, unto the truth, and their sensibleness, of this mercy. “The shout of a king (of a most Christian king) was among them.”

I know, your own thoughts prevent me in the proof of this, and read the truth of it in this day’s occasion. Who is here that is a lover of right and honesty, that is a son of peace and order, and deserves, indeed, the name of a Christian,—whose heart rejoiceth not within him to see such occasions as these ? Justice looking down upon us from heaven : deputies sent us from our great King in heaven, as well as from his sacred Majesty ; and they of our own nation, religion, profession,—of the same body, church, and nation, with ourselves, administer judgment among us, to relieve the oppressed, to pull the unjust-gotten prey from the jaws of the cruel ; to punish the evil, to encourage the good, and to cause righteousness to run down like a stream, and judgment like a running brook.

If any desire farther proof, I must remit him to such prophetic prediction as these,—“Kings shall be thy nursing-fathers,” &c. And, “I will give them judges of themselves, and rulers of their own people.”

And let them but compare the difference of the Jews' condition, when they were under the government of heathens in their own land,—Persians, Grecians, Romans,—and when they were under the government of those of their own blood and nation. And it deserves more observation than most men bestow upon it, that Paul appealed from the bench of his own nation, to a heathen tribunal,—a thing, I believe, hardly ever paralleled in that nation; but it shows what a wretched condition they were then come unto. Now, I call that a gospel-mercy,

1. That is for the benefit of those, who profess the gospel: and that Christian magistracy is so, he knows not the meaning of Christianity and Christian magistracy, that can deny it.

2. That is a gospel-mercy, that is dispensed by Christ in a gospel way of dispensation: and that Christian magistracy is so, I shall evidence to you by this demonstration:—

There is a magistracy in Turkey, China, and Tartary, as well as in England,—and there was a senate at Rome, as well as a parliament in England,—and all disposed by Christ, who is made Lord of all: but there is as much difference betwixt the way of dispensation, as there is betwixt Christ's ruling over all the world, as he was Creator, and dispensing common bounty,—and his ruling in his church as Mediator, and dispensing peculiar mercy: as much as betwixt his ruling in all nations, as the 'conqueror' of all God's enemies,—and his ruling in his church, as the 'Saviour' and Mediator of his people. "God hath made him Lord and Christ^d." There is more distinction in the words than many are aware of. He is 'Lord' over all: he is 'Christ,' to his own chosen.

3. That is a gospel-mercy, that doth promote and advance the efficacy of the gospel: and that a Christian magistracy doth so,—if it need any proof, I shall show it by this one instance.

There are great promises, in the prophets, of mercy, to be exhibited under the gospel, which seem incredible, and which some look for still to be accomplished, according to the letter; and hence their expectation of such glorious times to come; whereas, they are accomplished long ago, and accomplishing daily, but never were, nor ever shall be, according to the letter. Such are,

^d Acts, ii. 36.

That in Isa. ii. 4: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares." And that in Isa. xi. 6: "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb." And that in Isa. lxxv. 20: "There shall be no more thence an infant of days," &c. What shall we say to these things? Were they ever fulfilled according to the letter? No, nor ever shall be.

And yet God is faithful, and hath performed his promise; he hath done his part of what was promised, and his own people partake of the promise: and why should we look for any farther?

There will be 'warrings' in the world, whilst there are 'lusts' in the world; for warrings come from lusts^e. And there will be lusts in the world, while there are men in the world; for "every imagination of the thoughts of men's hearts are evil, only evil, and evil continually^f." But God hath done his part; he brought the gospel of peace into the world, that might have taught men and wrought men to better; but it is their own faults and wretchedness, that they are not better. And yet saints of God have this promise accomplished in themselves, and they are knit together in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace: and what accomplishment more can be expected?

And so there will be wolfish and serpentine affections and actions of men in the world, where there is sin in the world: and there will be ignorance in the world, and men will be infants in understanding, whilst there is fleshliness and worldliness in the world: yet God hath done his part; he hath brought the gospel into the world, that might tame men's brutish affections, and curb their actions; and the saints of God have this effect wrought upon them; but some men will be wolves and lions still.

He hath brought the light and knowledge of the gospel into the world, that men need not to be infants in understanding; and the saints of God, that embrace the gospel, come to be aged men in knowledge: but men will be ignorant still.

Hath not God, therefore, performed his promise? As Isa. v. 4: "What could God have done more" to this purpose, than he hath done, in affording the means for the effecting of this, as much as could be afforded?

And here comes in the work and employment of the ma-

^e James, iv. 1.

^f Gen. vi. 5.

gistracy. God is so fully a performer of his promise, that he hath left the issue not only to the bare preaching of the word, but he hath ordained also the sword and authority of the magistracy, to restrain men from their fightings and brutishness, and to force them out of their wilful ignorance, when the only preaching of the word will not persuade them. As when the priests, with the sounding of their trumpets, will not serve the turn to subdue Jericho, a host of men of arms must be ready to assist the work, and to do it.

It is in mercy to men's souls, that God hath ordained magistracy, as well as it is in mercy to their estates, and for the securing of their persons. It is a bond of love, whereby he would draw men from their own ruin and the ruining of others; a holy, tender, and loving violence, whereby, when the ministry of the gospel cannot persuade them to be good, he would restrain them from being evil, and would constrain them to be better than they are. A holy violence, that would make men good, whether they will or no.

Such a mercy is a Christian magistracy: an ordinance stamped with Christ's own kingly picture, and sent for a token to his church of special love and mercy: as Aaron, in his breast-plate of judgment, carried 'Urim and Thummim,' 'Light and Perfection,'—so magistrates, in the breast-plate of judgment, they always carry about with them, have written there, as it were, with Christ's own finger, 'Power and Mercy:' 'power,' derived from Christ to them,—and 'mercy,' derived from Christ by them to the church.

The pagans' and infidels' magistracy, that is among them, it is true, is an ordinance of Christ^s; "The powers that be, are ordained of God." But these are but crumbs, that fall from his table, of common providence, as he is the great ruler of all the world: but Christian magistracy is a full-furnished table of mercy from him, as the father and cherisher of his church.

Mercy to our estates, for their preservation; mercy to our lives, for their security; mercy to the nation, for its peace; mercy to widows, for their encouragement; mercy to the gospel, for its maintaining; mercy to souls, for their reducing:—such a mercy is a Christian magistracy; and so is the end, and such the fruit, of the execution of their office, the execution of judgment,—which is the third thing I have

to speak to, from the third clause in the text: "And judgment was given unto them."

III. He saith not 'power,' for that would not have included 'judgment;' but he saith, 'judgment,' which includeth also 'lawful power,'—yea, and something else, 'righteousness and justice.'

I am assured there is none that hear me this day, is so little acquainted with the style of Scripture, but he knoweth, that, when it speaketh of judgment as the work of the magistrate, it meaneth the execution of justice or of right judgment: "Shall not the Judge of all the world do right^h?" The very title of judge, speaketh doing right; as it was with the Judge of all the world, so with the judges of any part of it.

This, my Lords and Gentlemen, is your work and employment, to judge righteous judgment,—to plead the cause of the oppressed,—to relieve the fatherless and widow, and him that hath no helper,—to reward every one according to the justice of his cause before you.

As you carry the stamp of Christ's own image in your power, so it is no whit to the life, if justice be not stamped there also. And your being a mercy to the people, is by doing justice to the people.

I shall not here go about to teach you, what you have to do in your employment and function. I am far from supposing, that either you know not your duty, or that I know it better than yourselves. Only give me leave to be your remembrancer a little of what is the charge, that lies upon you: and that, not by setting any rules before you, but by setting some divine copies before you, most fairly written,—upon which to look with a single eye, may be enough to stir you up to your duty: and that the more, because we are commonly more wrought upon as men by example than by precept: I shall only propose three: two, copied out by God in his own example; and the third, a singular copy set out in his word. The first, I shall be bold to offer to you of the magistracy: the second, to all that have to do with you at the present occasion,—counsel, jurors, and witnesses; and the third, before all that hear me.

The first is this: You know God's attributes,—power, mercy, and justice. Now, God acteth not any of his attributes according to the utmost extent of the infiniteness of

^h Gen. xviii. 25.

it, but according to the most wise and most holy counsel and disposal of his own will. God never acted his power according to the utmost infinity of his power: for else, whereas he made one world, he might have made a thousand.

He never acted his mercy according to the utmost infinity of his mercy; for then, whereas he saveth but a little flock, he might have saved all men and devils.

Nor did he ever act his justice according to the utmost infinity of his justice; for then all flesh would fail before him, and the spirits that he hath created.

But his will, as I may speak it, acts as queen-regent in the midst of his attributes, and limits and confines their actings according to the sacred disposal of that.

So that he showeth his power, not when and where he can,—but when, and where, and how, he will show his power: he showeth his justice, not when and where he can,—but when and where he will show his justice: and he will show mercy, not on whom he can, but on whom he will show mercyⁱ.

Look upon this copy, and then reflect upon yourselves and your function. You have your attributes,—let me so call them,—of power, mercy, interest in the people, and the like: now, how are these to be acted by you? An unjust magistrate, like him, Luke xviii, would be ready to miswrite after the copy, and say, “I will act these after mine own will, as God acteth his after his own will.” No, he is mistaken: let him look better on his commission. The judgment that is put into his hand, is the will of God put into his hand. As the apostle saith, “This is the will of God, even your sanctification,”—so this is the will of God, even the judgment that is given him; his commission carries it not, ‘*sic velis, sic jubeas*,’ ‘do thou with thy power what thou wilt,’—but ‘*sic volo, sic jubeo*,’ ‘do in thine office, as it is my will, and as I command.’

The sun, in heaven, sends down his shine upon the earth; and we are to set all our dials by that light, and not by any candle of our own.

The will of God, as it is the rule of all his own actions, so he sends down the beams of it in his word to men, to be the rule of theirs. By the ministry, God puts his will, revealed in his word, into the hands of men, to do according to

ⁱ Rom. ix. 18.

that rule, and not by any rule of their own will. So the commission that he puts into the hands of the magistracy, is the will of God to act by, as he hath revealed in his word, not to act according to their own mind; not to show mercy, justice, power, and favour, as they please,—but as God's will appears in their commission.

It was the custom in Israel, that, when the king was crowned, the book of the law was put into his hand, the will of God to be his rule, and not his own. So when Joshua is made chief magistrate, God instates him in his power, and withal put the law into his hand^k; “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth,” &c. And so, at the crowning of young Joash^l, “They put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony.”

Look, then, upon the copy that is before you, and look upon the commission he hath given you. His will, in heaven, acts all his glorious attributes; and, as I may speak it with reverence, his will rules them. He hath transcribed his will in little in your commission, to act all yours: now “his will be done by you upon earth, as it is done by himself in heaven.”

A second copy, that I would present before you, and before all that have any thing to do with you at present about judicature,—counsel, witnesses, and jurors,—is God's own righteousness, and that especially in one particular example. It is needless to tell you, from Scripture, that the righteous God loves righteousness, delights in righteousness, practises righteousness, commands righteousness. That one acting of his does demonstrate all these to admiration,—and that is, his justice in justifying a sinner. Much is spoken in Scripture of this righteousness of God; and, indeed, never enough. “My righteousness is never to be revealed:—to bring in everlasting righteousness:—new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness,” &c. Never enough spoken, never enough conceived, of this righteousness: the most mysterious acting of heaven, the wonder of wonders among men,—the justice of God in justifying a sinner: a divine justice that exceeds divine justice,—divine justice turned into mercy. You may think I speak strangely: if I do it, I am something excusable, with Peter, ravished with the

^k Josh. i. 8.^l 2 Kings, xi. 12.

transfiguration. I am upon a subject, that may swallow up all minds with amazement:—but I clear my meaning.

In Rom. i. 17, it is said, “Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.” Revealed in the gospel, not in the law. Was there no revelation of justice, till the gospel came? Yes, the law revealed justice, but it was condemning justice; as that text speaks, “from faith to faith,”—so, from righteousness to righteousness. God’s justice was most divine, that appeared in the law to ‘condemn;’ but that justice exceeded in the gospel, to ‘justify.’ Where are they, that talk of being justified by their own works? Then must they have a righteousness of their own, that must outvie God’s condemning justice, which is infinitely just. But his own justifying justice doth outvie it. As it is said, “Where sin abounded, grace did superabound;”—so, where condemning justice was glorious, justifying justice was much more glorious.

I said, ‘justice was turned into mercy;’ I say, the greatest justice into the greatest mercy. How are we justified and saved? By mercy. True; and yet by justice become mercy, not ceasing to be justice, what it was,—but becoming mercy, what it was not. Here is a lively copy before you; God so loveth, so acteth justice, that he will satisfy it upon his own Son, that he might glorify it by way of mercy on all justified. His greatest mercy appeareth in this acting of his justice; and you are the greatest mercy to a people, when you do them the most justice.

A third and last copy that I would set before you all, that hear me this day, is fairly, yet seems strangely, written with God’s own hand in the gospel. In divers places of the New Testament, where mention is made of the law, and where you would think it meant both the tables, it comes off only with mention of the second; “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments^m:” you would look for all the ten; but look forward, and he pitcheth only upon the second table. So, Rom. xiii. 8, “He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law:” you would look for the whole law to be mentioned there; but look forward, in ver. 9, and only the second table is mentioned. So, Jam. ii. 8, “If you fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture,” &c: you would look for the whole law; but he concludes all under this,

^m Matt. xix. 17.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Why, where are the duties of the first table? See, how God put even all religion into the second table. As it is said, "Behold! how he loved Lazarus;" so, behold! how God loveth honest, upright, charitable dealing betwixt man and man.

I shall not insist, to show you the reason of this strange passage. I might tell you it is, because whatsoever men pretend of religion towards the commands of the first table, it is nothing, if it appear not in our obedience to the second. I might tell you, God puts you to that, that is more in your own power; as to obey the second table, is more so than the first. But I leave the copy in your own hands to read and comment on. And when you have studied it the most, you will find this to be the result,—how God requires, how God delights in, our righteous, upright, charitable dealings, one with another.

A SERMON^a,

PREACHED AT

HERTFORD ASSIZE,

MARCH 13, 1663.

JUDGES, XX. 27, 28.

And the children of Israel inquired of the Lord. For the ark of the covenant of the Lord was there in those days. And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days.

AND it was time to inquire of the Lord, considering their present condition and exigent: and it was well they had the ark in those days to inquire at, considering the evil of those days, and their exceeding wickedness. And it was strange, that Phinehas was then there, considering the time of the story, when he is thus brought in. The three clauses in the text,—that hint their ‘inquiring,’ and ‘the manner of their inquiring,’ and ‘the person by whom;’ they inquired of the Lord,—and they inquired at the ark of the covenant,—and they inquired by Phinehas,—require each one a serious explication; and each one explicated, it may be, will afford something of information, that every one hath not observed before.

I. “They inquired of the Lord.”—And it was time to inquire indeed, when business went so crossly with them, that though the Lord himself had encouraged them to that war, yet they lose so many thousands in the battle. At their first mustering, they ask counsel of God, and he allows their quarrel, and appoints their captain, ver. 18: “And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the Lord said, Judah shall go up first.” And yet, when they come to fight, they lose two-and-twenty thousand men, ver. 21. They ask counsel of God again, and he bids them go up; and yet, when they come to fight again, they lose eighteen

^a English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1065.

thousand men more. And now, after the loss of forty thousand men, they inquire again; and, indeed, it was very full time.

But what was it they inquired about? If why they thus fell, when God himself had encouraged them to the war, which was a very just query; had I or you been there, we might have resolved them without an oracle:—There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel; and a very strange accursed thing; that it is not strange, that thou canst not stand, but fallest thus before thine enemies.

In the chapter before, a Levite's concubine plays the whore, and runs from him; and as he fetches her again, she is paid in her kind, and whored with at Gibeah, till it cost her her life. Hereupon all Israel musters in arms as one man, and solemnly vows and resolves to avenge her quarrel. But in the chapter before that, idolatry is publicly set up in the tribe of Dan. And in the chapter before that, it is publicly enough set up in the town of Micah; and yet not one man, that stands up or stirs in the quarrel of the Lord.—O Israel, that art thus zealous in the quarrel of a whore, and hast been no whit zealous in the cause of the Lord,—it is no wonder, if thou fall, and fall again, before thine enemies.

So that it was the justice of God, that encouraged them to this war; and it had two parts to act. First, To punish Israel for that idolatry, against which they stirred not, and now stirred so in the cause of a strumpet: and then, secondly, To punish Gibeah and Benjamin for the abominable fact about that strumpet,—the one for acting, and the other for abetting it, and not delivering the offenders to deserved punishment.

So that had they inquired, why they fell so many in the war, when God himself had set them to it, this answer might easily have been given, without asking at an oracle; and no question but Phinehas, or what other holy men were in the army, did sadly observe it.

But before we pass farther, the observation, how God encourages them to this war, and yet foils them in it, minds me of two cases, that are something parallel, but only in this excepted, that they had not a precedent and dormant cause, why God should so check, when he had commanded and encouraged, but only a present and emergent.

The one is Jacob commanded and encouraged by God

to go from Haran to his own country, and God promised to be with him; and yet Christ, the angel of the covenant, meets him by the way, wrestles with him, seeks to kill him; and he escapes so narrowly, that he lamed him all his life. The emergent reason was, because Jacob, upon news of Esau's coming with four hundred armed men, was sorely shaken in his faith, soiled with distrust, and sends him a great multitude of cattle before he had tithed them, as his vow was to do. Hence God, that had commanded him, doth so check him; but he wept and made supplication, recovers his faith, and escapes with life, though not with all his limbs.

The other is Moses, commanded and encouraged by God to go for Egypt to deliver the people, and the power of miracles put into his hand: and yet, "It came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him^d." The emergent cause was Moses's distrust likewise: he had long declined the employment, as doubting and pleading his own insufficiency for it; and though God had given him this token, that he should bring the people to worship God at that mountain, yet durst not Moses venture to leave his wife behind him, lest he should not come to see her any more, but takes her with him though now in child-bed, and her child not yet eight days old, to be circumcised. And for this distrust, God, that had commanded him, yet doth check him with so great a danger: but he recovers his faith, escapes with life, sends back his wife, and goes on his journey.

But these failings, with these good men, were sudden and emergent. This fault of Israel had been sometime dormant, and they dormant under it; but now God awakens them with the alarm of a grievous slaughter; that if ever they will inquire about their condition and business, it is time for them to inquire now. But how do they do it?

II. And that is a second thing to be inquired after. The ark and Phinehas are here mentioned, because their inquiry was by Phinehas, and his inquiry at the ark.

And was it possible, that Phinehas should be then alive? He was one of the persons, that came out of Egypt^e: and it was three hundred and fifty years, at least, since they came out of Egypt, to the death of Samson, which, you see, is set

^d Exod. iv. 24.

^e Exod. vi. 23.

before this story, in the sixteenth chapter. Let Phinehas be supposed to have been in the swaddles, when they came out,—yet must he be, at the least, three hundred and fifty years old, if he were alive at the death of Samson, which is far above the date, that the ages of men went at at that time. Before the flood, indeed, the patriarchs lived almost to a thousand years: but, at the flood, man's age was halved, so that none that was born after, lived up full to five hundred. At the confusion of Babel, it was halved again; so that none were born after, that lived up, no, not to two hundred and fifty, as is easy to observe by computing the ages in Gen. xi. Nay, the ages of men stood not at that measure neither; but at the murmuring in the wilderness^e, they were shortened again, and the common stint of man's life brought to seventy or eighty years, or thereabouts, as Moses tells us in the ninetyeth Psalm: which Psalm was penned by him upon that very occasion.

So that it is not so much as to be imagined, that Phinehas attained to three hundred and fifty years of age; which he did and more, if the time of this story were according to the order of placing it in this book. But as it is very usual in Scripture, to dislocate stories out of their proper time and place, and that upon most divine reason,—so it is done here; and, indeed, more signally, than in any other place whatsoever: this story of the war at Gibeah, and that before, of the idolatry set up in Dan; and that before that, of the idolatry set up by Micah, in mount Ephraim, being set in the latter end of the book,—which, indeed, for their proper time, should have place near the beginning. And that,

First, Because, in chap. ii. 12, it is said, that idolatry broke out among them, as soon as the first generation, that had seen the wonders in the wilderness, was dead and gone. Now, that idolatry of the Danites, with the idol of Micah, was the first public breaking out. And thereupon, Dan is omitted to be named among the sealed of the twelve tribes, Rev. vii.

Secondly, It is said, that this occurrence at Gibeah was, when no king, i. e. no judge, in Israel was yet risen. It is repeated three times over^f, to point out, that these stories occurred, before any judge was.

^e Num. xiv.

^f Chap. xvii. 6; xviii. 1; and xxi. 25.

Thirdly, The wickedness at Gibeah is reckoned for the first notorious piece of villany in the land^g; “O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah.”

Fourthly, and lastly, That passage, in Judg. v. 8, speaks clearly of this matter: “They chose new gods; then was war in the gates: was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?”—‘They chose new gods,’ refers to the idolatry in Dan: ‘Then was war in the gates,’ to this civil war in Gibeah in their own gates: ‘Was shield or spear seen among forty thousand?’ to the forty thousand that fell in this war, as if neither shield nor spear had been among them.

I shall not trouble you with large discourses, to show, why these stories are displaced, and laid in this place,—whereas they occurred so soon in the story of this book; I shall only commend this to your conception. Samson, their last judge, after whose death their state declined, was of Dan: and their first public idolatry was in Dan. Samson’s life was sold for eleven hundred shekels of silver of every Philistine prince^h. And then look at the eleven hundred shekels of silver consecrated for making Micah’s idolⁱ, which was set up in the tribe of Dan^j; and you may easily perceive, that the Holy Ghost hath laid these stories thus together, that their sin in Dan, and shame in the fall of Samson of Dan, might be cast up together. Their last judge, Samson of Dan, came to so fatal and unhappy an end; and no wonder, for their first idolatry was in Dan. And thus you see, how Phinehas is still alive in this story, and he named, because they inquired by him; and the ark named, because he inquired at the ark. Which is the third inquiry.

III. But how inquired he? By Urim and Thummim. So was God’s direction to them^k; “And Joshua shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord.” As Joshua, the chief commander in his time, did inquire, by Eleazar the father,—so did the chief commander now, by Phinehas the son,—and both, by the judgment of Urim and Thummim.

But how was that? There are so many opinions about what Urim and Thummim was, and so great obscurities made, how the oracle was given by it, that it may seem to

^g Hos. x. 9.

^h Chap. xvi. 5.

ⁱ Chap. xvii. 2.

^j Chap. xviii. 30.

^k Num. xxvii. 21.

require another oracle, to tell how that oracle was given. I shall not tire you with diversities of opinions; I shall briefly lay down some particulars concerning this thing, upon which I myself am abundantly satisfied about it, and upon which, I suppose, any, that is not over-curious, may receive satisfaction.

1. None but knows the dress of the high-priest, Exod. xxviii, and particularly the breast-plate, the twelve stones, and the names of the twelve tribes engraven in upon them. And then it is said, at ver. 30, “And thou shalt put in the breast-plate of judgment the Urim and Thummim.” By the ‘breast-plate’ there is meant, as in ver. 15, 16, viz. that piece of embroidered work foursquare, and doubled of a span square, in which the twelve precious stones were to be set. And by the ‘Urim and Thummim’ is meant, the twelve precious stones themselves, which are called ‘Urim,’ or ‘Lights,’ or ‘Brightness,’—because of their shining lustre; and ‘Thummim,’ or ‘Perfections,’ because, with most exact and perfect compacture, they were all set and fixed in a plate and border of gold, in that embroidered piece, or that piece of cloth of gold.

2. The inquiry by Urim and Thummim was not upon any private occasion, nor by a private man, but by the prince or commander-in-chief; and that in some matter, that concerned the whole nation. This might be largely cleared, but needeth not; only this I cannot but observe, that, till Solomon’s time, there is mention and example of this inquiring by Urim; by Joshua, here in the text,—by Saul,—by David; but, after Solomon’s time, no such mention: not because the oracle then failed, but because, till David had done the work, the whole land, in the full extent that God had promised,—namely, to Euphrates,—was not conquered. And, therefore, in those times, this oracle was stirring for the direction of the prince or chief-commander in that expedition and employment.

3. There was no inquiring of any priest by Urim, who was not inspired by the spirit of prophecy. And hence it is, that, as the Jews well observe, after the first generation after the return out of captivity, the oracle by Urim and Thummim was not under the second temple at all: because, thenceforward, there never was any high-priest, that had the spirit of prophecy, or divine inspiration. The case of

Caiaphas was singular, and it was but once¹; “Being high-priest that year, he prophesied.” The emphasis and main reason lies in *that year*: that year, “when vision and prophecy should be sealed;” that year, when the Spirit should be poured down in so abundant a measure, as it was, Acts ii. He being high-priest *that year*, had one drop of that shower of divine inspiration that fell that year,—and he prophesied. But, before him, had there been no high-priest, that was endued with the spirit of prophecy, from the times of Nehemiah^m; and, accordingly, not the oracle by Urim and Thummim.

4. That oracle, therefore, was not given by any audible voice from off the ark, nor by rising of the letters of the names of the tribes in the precious stones, that should spell out the answer,—for two or three letters in the alphabet were wanting in those names: nor was it by change of colour in the letters or stones, as is conceited by some; but the manner of inquiring and receiving answer was thus:—The high-priest, with all his habiliments on, particularly the breast-plate, with the twelve precious stones in it upon his breast, the names of the twelve tribes engraven in the stones, stood before the ark, only the veil between; and so he presented the names, and represented the persons, of the twelve tribes before God. He proposed the thing that was inquired, as Phinehas here in the name of the people; “Shall I go up against my brethren?” And the Lord presently inspired him with immediate revelation, discovering to him what was his mind in that case; and so he told it the people. As Phinehas here, “Go up now against Benjamin again, and you shall prevail.”

And thus have we done with the historical concernment of the text. And now, instead of any doctrinal observations upon it, I might take into consideration three material inquiries, which lie fairly hinted in the three parts I have spoken to.

I. From the first part, that speaks of the children of Israel’s inquiring of the Lord,—we may be justly moved to inquire, how the children of England may inquire of the Lord, in their doubtings or perplexities, as Israel did.

II. From the second part, that speaks of the ark being there in those days, it may justly call upon us to consider,

¹ John, xi. 51.

^m Chap. vii. 65.

why, or whereupon, the ark carried that name and title that it doth here, and in many other places,—viz. “The Ark of the Covenant.”

III. From the third and last part, that speaks of their inquiring by Phinehas the high-priest,—it may justly move this query,—Whether the high-priest were prophetic or oracular by his function? I take the hint for this, from the Rhemists’ note upon Caiaphas’s prophesying, John xi. 50; where they say, “that the gifts of the Holy Ghost followed his order and office, though he were so wicked;” and so bring it home to Peter’s chair; that the pope, sitting there, cannot want the Spirit.

I shall especially pitch upon the two first,—namely, to take up that inquiry, ‘Why the ark was called the Ark of the Covenant?’ And the resolution of that query will help not a little to resolve the first, as to the mainest things, that we are to inquire of the Lord about.

How frequently the ark is called by this title, ‘the ark of the covenant,’ I need not instance: hundreds of places do evidence it. But what could any one see in the ark, that might speak God’s covenant? There was, indeed, the mercy-seat upon it, and the two cherubims at the several ends of it, and the cloud oft between; and this was all that any Israelite could see, that looked upon it. But this was not that, that entitled it to that title; but the two tables of the law, that were in it. And so Moses himself doth make the exposition, *Exod. xxxiv. 28*; “He wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.”—*Deut. ix. 11*; “At the end of forty days and forty nights, the Lord gave me the two tables of stone, the tables of the covenant.”—And, to spare more instances, you find the terms ‘covenant’ and ‘commands’ to be convertible, or to mean one and the same thing: *Psal. cv. 8*, “He hath remembered his covenant, the word which he commanded.” And, *Psal. cxi. 9*, “He commanded his covenant for ever.”—‘He commanded his covenant;’ a strange expression, and a comfortless expression, as one would think: his covenant to be nothing but a company of impossible commands: his covenant to be nothing but a law, the ministration of which, the apostle tells us^b, was the ministration of death. As he, “I thought he would have stroked his hand over the sore,

^b 2 Cor. iii. 7.

and prayed, and he bids only, Go wash in Jordan,"—so, one would think, it should be said, "He hath promised, tendered, engaged his covenant, and it comes off only with this, 'He hath commanded his covenant.'"

And here we are come to the great question,—'Under what notion the moral law stands in the covenant of grace?' You know who they were, that have held,—and, I doubt, too many hold it at this day,—that, to Israel, it was a covenant of works; and thereupon infer, that Christians are delivered from the obligation of the moral law, because they are not under the covenant of works, but the covenant of grace. And, accordingly, they understand that distinction of the old covenant and new, mentioned so much by the apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that the old covenant means the 'moral law,'—and the new covenant, the 'gospel.' To these men let me first speak in the style of God to Abraham^c; "Look up to heaven, and count the stars, if thou canst number them;" so, look up to heaven, and see the old moon and the new, and observe them. Are they really two several moons? No; but one and the same moon, under various shapes. Or, look on the earth, upon a person now regenerated; he was, before, an old creature,—now, he is a new^d. What! is he now a really distinct person from what he was before? No, but of a different condition only:—the same man, but his condition and temper changed. So the covenant of grace is the same, like Christ, the chief tenor of the covenant, "yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever:" the same from the first day that it was given to Adam, to the last day of the world, and till time shall be no more: the same under the law, the same under the gospel, but clothed in different garments, in administrations of various fashions.

The covenant of grace, to the Jew, was, "believe in Christ and be saved," as it is to us; as the apostle clears in all his Epistles, more particularly in Heb. xi. But to them God added thus, "Because the doctrine of Christ is not yet so clear, use these ceremonies, which figure out the actings and office of Christ,—the priesthood, his mediating,—the sacrifices, his death,—'cleansing with blood,' his purging of sin, and the like. And, because no other people is yet to be admitted to the church and true religion, but yourselves, use these ceremonies, to distinguish you from all other peo-

^c Gen. xv. 5. ^d 2 Cor. v. 17.

ple, till time come, that the Gentiles come to be admitted." So that these ceremonies were not the covenant of grace to them, nor a covenant of works to them; but only the manner and mode of the administration of the covenant of grace, till the gospel should come; which when it came, and Christ was come, then the doctrine of Christ was clear; and when all nations were come in, then were these ceremonies laid aside, and a clean different administration of the covenant of grace brought in; and, under these reasons, are these different administrations called 'the old and new covenant.' So that the ceremonial part of the law is called the old covenant; but the moral doth not fall under that title, nor vanish as the other did.

And, secondly, To these, that we are speaking of, let me propose this question:—Did God go backward in his covenanting, first to give a covenant of grace to Adam, when he had broke his covenant of works,—and, after, to give a covenant of works to Israel, and to lay by his covenant of grace? The sun in the sky stood still once, and went backward once; but the glorious Sun of righteousness, that rose in the covenant of grace, the first day of Adam,—never stood still, never went back; but is still keeping his course, to save by grace, to save in the covenant of grace, and not by works. "If I go to Jonathan's house again (saith Jeremiah), I shall surely die;" and, if God send man back to a covenant of works, when Adam himself failed in his covenant of works, man is but lost for ever.

And, thirdly, Let us read the draught of the covenant itself. This indenture,—made betwixt the great God and poor dust and ashes, sinful and miserable,—witnesseth, that God, of his infinite love, and grace, and mercy, doth promise, and demise, and let, to this poor creature, grace and glory, interest in himself and heaven: provided always, that man keep his law, and do those commands that God lays upon him. For, God could not make a covenant of grace, but it must include commandments and a law; unless he would have conditioned thus with him; "Do what thou wilt, live as thou wilt; eat, drink, revel, be epicure, be atheist, and yet thou shalt enjoy me for ever, thou shalt be blessed for ever." We may tremble at such language. The stool of wickedness could do no more. And how cheap and vile a thing were God, if to be enjoyed on such terms as these!

Man, as he is a creature, must have a law from his Creator, or else God should resign his authority, and let man be his own God. Our obedience to God is founded in God himself;—‘If God be God, serve him :’—an argument so urgent, that it is never to be dissolved. And, therefore, that clause is set before the ten commandments, and set after divers commands afterward, ‘I am the Lord,’—as an argument sufficient to challenge obedience. There is nothing can dissolve the bond of man’s obedience to his Creator, unless God would cease to be God ; for, “if God be God, serve him.”

And, therefore, the covenanting for grace is so far from abating of a law to be laid upon man, that it requires it the more ; because, in *that*, he is not looked upon only as a creature, to serve his Creator,—but as a creature, that is to enjoy his Creator. Accordingly, when God created Adam, he wrote a law in his heart, and made a covenant with him, upon the full terms of the law, for perfect obedience ; and this is commonly called ‘his covenant of works with Adam.’ The short draught of that covenant is this :—“If thou performest perfect obedience, according to the tenor of this law, ‘To love the Lord with all thy heart,’ &c. thou shalt be blessed, and enjoy God for ever ; if not, then thou shalt be cursed, and perish for ever.” Now, observe the two contrary parts of this proposal of God, which we cannot but conceive to have been the tenor of the covenant of works with him. First ; The ‘promissory’ part, “If thou performest perfect obedience, thou shalt be saved.”—There is mercy, that God promiseth salvation, as well as justice, that he requires obedience. For Adam’s obedience was due from him as a creature, though there had been no salvation for him : but, in the ‘threatening’ part, there was nothing but justice ; “If thou performest not perfect obedience, thou shalt perish,” and all the equity in the world in it ; for, as such obedience was due from him to God, so was he then able to perform it, and deserved perdition, if he did not.

But Adam fell, and that covenant of grace came in ; and then, what became of the equity of that law ? Did the covenant of grace extinguish God’s just claim of man’s obedience ? Nay, of man’s perfect obedience ? No ; for God must not lose one tittle of his right and due ; but that grace, that made the covenant, did contrive that Christ must pay

the perfect obedience,—and the believer, the best obedience he can. As he, under the law, that could not reach a lamb, &c. his sacrifice was not remitted, but that sacrifice abated, and he was to bring what he could, two turtles: so man is now grown poor, and cannot perform perfect obedience, yet the covenant of grace doth not remit his obedience, but abates the execution; takes perfect obedience, in his behalf, from Christ, but requires the perfectest he can perform from him too:—so that a sinner, though he cannot perform obedience, is not, therefore, acquitted from the law's challenge of obedience; nor a believer, though Christ has paid perfect, nay, infinite, obedience for him, yet he is not acquitted from obeying the best he can; and the reason is, because nothing can disannul God's just claim of obedience from his creature.

So that this law of obedience, being founded in God's being God, and in our being his creatures, it is impossible that God should make a covenant with man for grace and salvation, and this not be included. Now though, in the covenant of grace, it stands not as in Adam's covenant of works, as by the performance of which to be justified,—yet doth it so stand in it, as, without works performed, there is no participation of God; nay, without which, the covenant is no covenant. What is said of the sacramental elements, the like may be said in this case: “*Elementum, adde verbum, et fit sacramentum;*” “Here are the elements, add the word of institution, and it becomes a sacrament;” so, “*Hoc est promissum, adde legem, et fit foedus;*” “Here is the promise, add the law, and it is a covenant.” For, though promise and covenant be sometimes convertible,—yet the promise, barely considered, is not the covenant, without the conditions of the law affixed to it. And, under this notion, in God's own language, the commandments of God are the covenant of God. Psal. ciii. 18; “To those that keep his covenant,” which is explained in the next clause, “which remember his commandments to do them.”—“They that keep his covenant?” One would think it should be, “To those to whom he keeps his covenant.” But herein the main stress of the matter lies,—if they keep his commandments, there is no doubt of the God of truth performing his promise. As the stress of God's reconciliation to man is laid mainly, in Scripture, upon man's being reconciled to God; “God

was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself^e:" "To reconcile all things to himself^f." Not so much himself to the world, as the world to himself; not so much himself to all things, as all things to himself: for, here is the great business, to get man reconciled unto God, and then, no doubt of God's being reconciled to man. So, there is no doubt of God's performing his promise of grace and salvation; but the great business is, man's performing his part, and keeping his law.

And thus having spoken to that question, which, in our enumeration, came the second, 'Why the ark is called the Ark of the Covenant,'—it hath made some way to answer the first,—'How may Christians inquire of God in their doubts, as Israel did, here and elsewhere, in theirs?'

I must answer briefly, and that in the words of God himself^g, "To the law and to the testament:" to the written word of God, 'Search the Scriptures.' As you might appeal to Balaam to bear witness concerning the blessedness of Israel, whereas he was called forth to curse them;—so, for the proof of this matter,—viz. that there is now no other way to inquire of God, but only from his word,—you may appeal to those very Scriptures, that they produce, that would maintain that there are revelations and inspirations still, and that God doth still very often answer his people by them.

They produce that, that "they shall all be taught of God;" that is, say they, "all the saints shall be taught by the Spirit;" but that passage aims a clean other way, as relating to the Gentiles, as it doth in Isaiah liv. 13, whence it is quoted. It means, that 'whereas they, in their heathen blindness, had been taught of the devil, by his oracles, prophets, pythonesses, and the like,—God would bring in the gospel among them, and so they now should be taught of God.' Or, as relating to the Jews (as Christ applies it in John vi. 45), the meaning is, that, 'whereas they had been taught by men, either by scribes and Pharisees, which were evil men,—or by holy priests and prophets, which were but men,—they should in time be taught, and now were, of God himself, Christ preaching among them,' as the apostle observes, Heb. i. 1.

They produce that, Heb. viii. 11; "And they shall not teach every one his neighbour, and every man his brother,

^e 2 Cor. v. 19.

^f Col. i. 20.

^g Isa. viii. 29.

saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me from the least to the greatest ;” from Jer. xxxi. 34. Whereas the meaning is but this, that ‘ by the word of the gospel should come in so clear light, and so great means of knowledge, that none but might know God, if they would seek to know him.’ And to the very same sense and tenor, speaks that strange expression, Isa. lxxv. 20 ; “ There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days, for the child shall die a hundred years old :” that is, ‘ there shall be so clear and great means of knowledge by the gospel, that none needed to be a child in understanding, if they would but labour to know : and that even the young child might speak itself to be, as it were, a hundred years old for knowledge, if men would apply themselves to the means afforded for knowledge.

They produce that, in 1 John ii. 27 : “ The anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you,” &c. Whereas, the apostle himself doth explain, what that ‘ anointing’ is,—namely, ‘ truth ;’ “ But as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth :” which is the very common title of the ‘ gospel’ in the gospel. To speak fully to this matter, I should clear this,—

I. That, after God had completed and signed the Scripture-cans, Christians must expect revelations no more. It was promised by God, that he would pour down of his Spirit in the last days ; but it means the last days of Jerusalem ; and when she had finished her days, and seen her last, the Spirit, in such kind of effusion, is to be looked for no more.

II. I should show, that the Scripture containeth all things necessary for us to know or to inquire of God about. “ It is not for you to know the times and the seasons,” Acts i.—It is not for Peter to inquire what should become of John ; “ What is that to him ?” But what is necessary for us to know,—“ To the law, and to the testimony,”—there you may learn it. I need not to tell you, that you may inquire there, and learn what to believe, what to do, what to avoid, how to demean yourselves towards God, towards your neighbours, towards yourselves, how to come to heaven, and the like :—for I hope, none come hither at this time, upon the present occasion, but have consulted with this oracle to

direct them, Whether to go to suit with their neighbour or no, how to bear witness, how to counsel, how to determine. But the common curiosity of men is ready to inquire, How should I know my fortune? Why, I may tell them from this oracle, if I may use the term 'fortune' in such a case; Isa. iii. 10, 11, "Say ye to the righteous, It shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him."

But shall I propose a case of the greatest concernment, that a man can possibly inquire about? and that is,—How shall I know, whether my sins are pardoned, whether I have the favour and love of God, whether I shall be saved?—At Urim and Thummim they never inquired about any of these things; and I believe, such questions were rarely proposed by any, to any prophet. And yet, this oracle we are speaking of,—'the law and testimony,'—will resolve this query, as far as is needful for any man to know; so little are we behind them, in the advantage of inquiring of God.

Is there any here, that proposeth this question from a good heart, and for a good end? Let me close with him in the words of God^d, "If ye will inquire, inquire ye."

But, first, let me tell him, that 'a man may be saved, though he do not know he shall be saved, till he come to salvation.' And I doubt not, but there are many in heaven, that were never certain, that they should come there, till they came thither. A good man may die doubting, fearing, trembling; and yet his estate be sure for blessedness, though he be never assured of it, till he enjoy it. For it is faith, that secures salvation, and is absolutely necessary for it,—assurance is not so absolutely necessary. "If ye kill me, yet will I trust in him," saith Job: a strong faith, but little assurance; and yet, his eternal state secure enough.

Secondly, A man may have faith, and yet not know that he hath it. As how many of the dear saints of God, have groaned under this doubtfulness! And, answerably, a man may have certainty of salvation, as to the thing itself,—though not assurance as to his own apprehension. I deny not all this while, that assurance may be had, though it be not obtained by all; and that it is to be striven after according

^d Isa. xxi. 12.

to that, "give all diligence to make your calling and election sure."

But, to the coming to satisfaction upon this inquiry, do as the priest in his inquiries,—put on the breast-plate, and go and stand before the ark of the covenant, and there inquire. Bring your conscience to face the law, and then consult with it. For this purpose, consider these properties of conscience:—

1. The actings of conscience are only about things betwixt us and God.

2. The actings of conscience in this case, and, indeed, in all, are not directly, but by reflection: the very name of conscience imports no less, 'a knowledge by reflection.' Thus a sinner, by his conscience, knows he hath sinned. How? By reflecting on the law, he knows he hath deserved wrath by the law.

3. As conscience condemns, in the same method it comforts and acquits. In Rom. ii. 15, conscience accuses or excuses in the same way; both by reflection upon a law. For,

4. The ultimate resolution in this inquiry, must be from the 'mandatory' part of the covenant, not the 'promissory.' Many a man deceives himself, undoes himself, by judging his case from the promises, and not taking his resolution whence it should come,—viz. his conscience, and God's commandments laid together. God hath promised pardon, mercy, salvation; "therefore, I doubt not," saith a secure soul, "but all will be well with me."—But how knowest thou these promises belong to thee? Go to the mandatory part of the covenant, the moral and evangelical law: and lay conscience to that, as face and glass; and there what seest thou? The law commands thus and thus: look in, conscience, hast thou done thus? If so, thou mayest conclude, that thou shalt participate of the promises, that are affixed to such commandments. Thou canst not look on the sun in heaven; but mayest see it in a pail of water. Thou canst not immediately discover, whether God loves thee, has pardoned thee, intends thee for salvation; but thou canst do it by reflection, betwixt law and conscience, betwixt this and the conditions of the covenant. Peter does not conclude, 'Lord, thou lovest me,' but 'Lord, I love thee.' Look on the command, 'love the Lord;' then look in conscience, and that gives the reflection; and so thou mayest be secured.

A SERMON^a,

PREACHED AT

HERTFORD ASSIZE,

MARCH 29, 1663.

2 PET. III. 13.

Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

It is well they might so, and had warrant of promise so to do; otherwise, where had their expectation been? The verses immediately before, speak nothing but devastation and ruin of heaven and earth; and if there had been nothing beyond that to be looked after, their hopes and expectancy had been ruined also; “but we (says our apostle) look for new heavens and a new earth.”

But of what nature they, is all the question. I doubt some men construe these words of the apostle, as far distant from his sense almost, as the earth is distant from the heavens; whilst they conceive from hence, that, after the dissolution of all things, yet there shall be a renewing of heaven and earth, and they shall be as before, as to their substance and form, only their quality changed. To this they apply, Rom. viii. 19, 20; “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God,” &c.

They would make our apostle say Sibboleth, whether he will or no; whereas he speaks Shibboleth, plain enough, to a far differing sense.

For the discovery of his meaning, have patience a little, whilst I make this observation clear unto you, which may be useful to you in reading several places of Scripture,—

That the ruin and destruction of Jerusalem, and the Jewish commonwealth and economy, is set forth in Scripture, in such expressions, as if it were the destruction and dissolution of the whole world. Moses beginneth this style,

^a English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1073.

in Deut. xxxii. 22, where he is speaking of that vengeance:—“For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and it shall burn to the lowest hell, and it shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.” Would you not think, that the dissolution of all things were in mention? Look upon the context, and you find it to mean no other, than the destruction of that nation. Jeremiah yet higher, chap. iv. 23; “I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void: and the heavens, and they had no light.” You would think all the world were returning there, to her old chaos again. Add yet farther, “I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.” You would think, that the whole universe were dissolving; but look but in ver. 27, and it speaks no other than the dissolution of that people, “For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate.”

Our Saviour yet higher, Matt. xxiv. 29; “The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man,” &c. Who would not conclude, that these expressions mean no other thing in the world, than the last dissolution of the world, and Christ’s coming to judgment: yet, look well upon the context, and it speaketh plainly, that the meaning is only of the dissolving of the Jews’ city and state: and Christ speaks it out most plainly at ver. 34, where he asserts, that ‘that present generation should not pass, till all those things were fulfilled.’

The beloved disciple follows his Master’s style, upon the very same subject, in the sixth of his Revelation; where, after he had described the means of the destruction of this wretched people, under the opening of certain seals, by sword, famine, and plague; he comes at last, in ver. 12—14, to speak their final dissolution itself, in the very like terms: “The sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood: and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, and the heavens departed, as a scroll that is rolled together, and every mountain and island were removed out of their places.” One would think, the final dissolution of all the world were spoken of; but look in ver. 16, and you find the very same words, that our Saviour applies to the destruc-

tion of that people^d; “They said unto the mountains, Fall on us, and hide us,” &c. Our apostle Peter’s meaning is no other in the expression before my text, where, when he speaks of the “heavens being dissolved by fire, the earth and the works therein burnt up, and the elements melting with fervent heat,” he intends no other thing, than the dissolving of their church and economy, by fiery vengeance; the consumption of their state, by the flame of God’s indignation; and the ruin of their elements of religion, by God’s fury. Not ‘the elements,’ in Aristotle’s sense, of fire, air, earth, and water; but, ‘the elements,’ in his brother Paul’s sense, whom he mentions presently after my text,—the ‘carnal and beggarly elements’ of their Mosaic rites and traditionary institutions.

By this time, you plainly see in what sense “the new heavens and the new earth” is to be taken in the text: but for the fuller and clearer understanding of these things still, give me yet a little farther patience to show you, that, as the destruction of that old world of the Jewish people and economy is uttered by such expressions, as if it were the destruction of the whole universe; so, the times going near before, and concurrents going along with that destruction, are phrased by expressions also suitable. And this I shall observe to you in four heads:—

I. There is much mention of the ‘last days’ in Scripture, which, in most places, is not to be understood of the last days of the world, as some take them, and so mistake, but of the last days of Jerusalem and the Jewish state. And, indeed, the greatest mercies, that were promised to that people were promised to occur in those last days; as Isa. ii. 2, Hos. iii. 5, Joel ii. 28, as he is cited by this our apostle, Acts ii. 17: these things are not to be allotted to the last days of the world, but to the last days of that city; as Peter’s very allegation out of Joel makes it plain, if there were no more proof. “Now (saith he) is fulfilled that, which was spoken by the prophet Joel, ‘In the last days I will pour out,’” &c. These are the ‘last days,’ there intended, and now the thing hath received its accomplishment. For, how improper is it to construe him in such a sense as some do,—This is that which, Joel foretold, should come to pass, in the last days of the world, two or three thousand years hence.

^d Luke, xxiii. 30.

And so, on the contrary, the worst of men and times are foretold to be in those last days of Jerusalem, because they did not improve those mercies, 1 Tim. iv. 1, and 2 Tim. iii. 1 : and our apostle in the third verse of this chapter : let the apostle John explain all ; “ Little children, it is the last time ; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists ; whereby we know, that it is the last time^e.”

II. In such a sense are such phrases as these to be understood ; “ Upon whom the ends of the world are come^f.” Not the very last times of the world ; for the world hath lasted sixteen hundred years, since Paul spake that ; and how long yet it may last, who knoweth ? but the end of that old world of the Jewish state, which then hasted on very fast. In the same sense are the words of our apostle, in his First Epistle, chap. iv. 7, “ The end of all things is at hand ;” not the end of the world, but of that city, nation, and economy : the like is that, James v. 9 ; “ Behold, the Judge standeth before the door ;” and divers other of the like nature.

III. The vengeance of Christ upon that people, in that final destruction, is set out and called, his ‘ coming,’ his ‘ coming in his kingdom,’ and ‘ in clouds,’ and ‘ with power,’ and ‘ great glory.’ His ‘ comings,’ ‘ in his kingdom^h,’ ‘ in power and gloryⁱ.’ Nor is this any figure ; for observe, “ This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled^j.” Accordingly, the day of that vengeance is called, “ the day of the Lord.”

IV. The state of the church and gospel after that dissolution of that old world, is called, sometimes, ‘ the world to come^k ;’ sometimes, ‘ new heavens and new earth,’ as in the text ; sometimes, ‘ all things new,’—as, ‘ old things are past away ; behold, all things are become new^l.’

So that, by this time, you see plainly the meaning of our apostle at this place. In the verses before, he speaks of the dissolution of the Jewish church and state in such terms, as the Scripture useth to express it by, as if it were the dissolution of the whole world : and, in the words of the text, of the new face and state of the church and world, upon the dissolution, when a new people and new economy took place : “ We, according to his promise.”

^e 1 John, ii. 18.

^f 1 Cor. x. 11.

^g John, xxi. 22.

^h Matt. xvi. 28.

ⁱ Matt. xxiv. 30.

^j Ver. 34.

^k Heb. ii. 5.

^l 2 Cor. v. 17.

The promise is in Isa. lxxv. 17: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth." Where, if you look into the context before, you shall find the sense justified, that I put upon the words, and these 'new heavens' and 'new earth' created after the Jews' casting off and destruction. It is a strange opinion that would persuade you, that the most glorious things, that are foretold by the prophets, should come to pass when the Jews are called, which calling is yet expected: whereas, those glorious things are plainly enough intimated to come to pass at the Jews' casting off. I might name many places: I shall not expatiate upon that subject here: this very chapter speaks enough to justify what I say. In the second verse, God complains, "I have spread out my hands all the day long, to a rebellious people." This the apostle, in the tenth of the Romans and the last verse, applies unto that people: "But to Israel he saith, All the day long have I stretched forth my hand to a disobedient and gainsaying people."

The prophet, along the chapter, telleth what shall become of that people. At ver. 6, "I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom: your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together (saith the Lord) which have burnt incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills; therefore," &c. At ver. 12, "I will number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter." At ver. 13, "Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry," &c. At ver. 15, "You shall leave your name for a curse to my chosen." And then follows the promise that is related to in the text, "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth." Though you are gone, yet all the world shall not be gone with you. For, though I destroy my old people, the old heavens and earth, of the old economy, yet I shall provide myself a new people of the Gentiles, when the Jews shall be a people no more: and when that old world is destroyed, I will create "new heavens and a new earth."

Such another passage is that of our Saviour, Matt. xxiv. 31; where when he had described the ruin of the Jewish nation in the terms we have spoken of before,—and it might be questioned, What then shall become of a church, and where shall it be? "The Son of man (saith he) shall send his angels," or ministers, "with the sound of the trumpet" of the gospel,

“and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heaven to the other,” among all nations.

Thus had Peter read this great promise in Isaiah, the evangelical prophet,—thus had he heard it from the mouth of the great Prophet, his sacred Master; and, therefore, it is no wonder, if, when it is confirmed by the mouth of two such witnesses, he undoubtedly look for “new heavens and a new earth,” according to such a ‘promise.’ But what is meant by ‘righteousness,’ in this place?

1. Not God’s punitive or distributive righteousness or justice: for that was ever^m. The Judge of all the world did right, ever since the world was: in the old world, in all the world,—and the same for this, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

2. Not that men were more righteous towards the latter end of the world, than before, as some dream of such glorious things yet to come: for there is no such promise in all the Scripture. True, indeed, that promise of such glorious things was in the last days of Jerusalem; but where is any promise of any such things in the last days of the world?

3. Nor doth it mean the glorified estate; for where do you find righteousness applied to that estate? It is commonly applied to the state of believers here.

4. Therefore it means, ‘justification of sinners,’ or ‘that righteousness, by which they are justified.’

The righteousness of God, which is witnessed by the law and the prophets: even the righteousness of God, “which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe,” as the apostle most divinely doth expound it.

This is the ‘righteousness,’ that is so gloriously spoken of throughout all the Scriptures; “To bring in everlasting righteousnessⁿ.” “My righteousness is near to be revealed^o,” to which that is agreeable, Rom. i. 17, “In the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.” Why, was not the righteousness of God revealed in all times before? Was not his justice revealed in the law? Yea, his condemning justice, but his justifying justice in the gospel.

This is the meaning of the apostle here: That as God had promised to create new heavens and a new earth,—a new church, and people, and economy, among the Gentiles, when the old Judaic one should be destroyed,—so, in this new

^m Gen. xviii.

ⁿ Dan. ix. 24.

^o Isa. lvi. 1.

created world, 'justifying righteousness' should dwell most evidently, and appear most glorious, when such abominable ones, as the Gentiles had been, should be justified. Justifying righteousness had showed itself in the world in all generations, from Adam and righteous Abel, upon all that believed; but, upon the believing Gentiles most especially, both because of the multitude that were justified, and men that before had been so far from righteousness.

You may see a picture of what is intended in this text, in the fourth of the Revelation, where there is a scheme of this new world, that our apostle speaketh of, from the promise in the prophet. There is a scene fashioned, of Christ sitting in the midst of the gospel-church, platformed according to the form of God's dwelling in the midst of the people of Israel, in his tabernacle, and upon the mercy-seat. His throne is said to be in 'heaven,' in the second verse, but it means in his 'church:' for so 'heaven' is taken in most places in the Revelation: and observe, before his throne in heaven is a 'sea of glass^p,' as the 'molten sea' was before the temple: there is an altar before the throne, and offering of incense^q, as there was at the temple: nay, there is the temple itself filled with smoke^r, as the tabernacle and temple were at their dedication.

About his throne were, first, four living creatures, on the four sides of it, as the four squadrons of priests and Levites pitched on the four sides of the tabernacle, betwixt God and the people. On the outside of them sat four-and-twenty elders, the representatives of the whole church, as the squadrons of the people pitched on the one side of the squadron of the priests and Levites. And it is said these four-and-twenty elders were 'clothed in white;' which speaks the very things we are speaking of; for so doth the Holy Ghost himself explain it; "The fine linen is the righteousness of the saints^s:" and, "They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb^t." Strange washing! washed them white in blood! You would think, that should make them of another colour: but the whiteness that we are speaking of, is the pure white of justification, and nothing can purify to that dye, but the blood of Christ.

And here let me also crave your patience a little to speak

^p Ver. 6.

^q Chap. viii. 3.

^r Chap. xv. 8.

^s Chap. xix. 8.

^t Chap. vii. 14.

to another text of Scripture, which speaketh fully to the matter we are upon, but which is not so clearly rendered to its proper purpose, but that it hath produced no little controversy. And that is these words; "Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had yet being uncircumcised^u." Generally, all translations run in the same tenor: whereas, these words, "which he had yet," are not at all in the original; as you, that cannot read the original, may see by that, that they are written in a different character. The Greek hath it thus, Σφραγίδα τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῆς πίστεως, τῆς ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ 'verbatim' to be rendered thus; "He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith, in the uncircumcision:" and not to be understood of the righteousness of faith, which Abraham had in his uncircumcision,—though it is true he had it,—but "a seal of the righteousness by faith, which was to be in the uncircumcision," or in the believing Gentiles. And that this sense is most agreeable to the intent of the apostle in that place, needs no more proof than the serious observing of the nature of his discourse from those words forward. And that it is most agreeable to the end of the institution of circumcision, needs no more proof, than the serious observing of the story of its institution.

That you have in Gen. xvii. 4, where this promise is given to Abraham, "Thou shalt be the father of many nations." In what sense "the father of many nations," the apostle clears in the words next following those, that we are upon: "That he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also." So that this was the covenant, that God makes with Abraham there,—that the uncircumcision should believe, and become the sons of Abraham, embracing his faith.

This covenant and promise, God confirms with a double seal:—1. With the change of his name from Abram to Abraham: from אַבְרָם a 'high father,' to אַבְרָהָם the 'father of a great multitude:' and, 2. With the seal of circumcision; "A seal of the righteousness by faith," which should be "in the uncircumcision," or in the Gentiles, that should believe.

Ponder the words and the context, and the story of the institution of circumcision well, and you will find this to be the main aim and end of it. Not a seal of the righteousness

^u Rom. iv. 11.

by faith which Abraham had, being uncircumcised, but of the righteousness by faith, that the uncircumcision should have, when they came to believe. And it speaks the very same thing with the text,—that when God should create the ‘new heavens’ and the ‘new earth’ of the Gentile church, when the Jewish should be cast off, that righteousness, or justification by faith, should dwell and shine in it.

I have been something long in the explanation of the words, but the necessity of the thing may plead my excuse. And now, they being thus explained, they offer three most noble themes for discourse before us.

I. Here is mention of a ‘new world.’

II. Of God’s ‘promise.’

III. Of justification, or righteousness.

And upon which of these shall I fix? Any of the three would take up the time, that is allotted: therefore, I will lay my right hand upon Ephraim’s head, which is the youngest.

The word ‘righteousness,’ you see, is last born in the text; and yet, indeed, the birthright is due unto it. It is the first aim of our apostle, that he looketh at, and the other two are but appendices to it in his aim. Follow his eye with yours, and see where he fixeth. ‘Righteousness’ is the thing he looketh after; the ‘new heavens and the new earth’ are the state and place, where he looketh for it; and the promise is the perspective, through which he looked at it.

I shall, therefore, pitch upon that as the main subject of the text, and, from the eye of the apostle so intent upon it, observe,

How desirable a thing to be looked after, righteousness is, as it speaks justification.

Methinks, Peter speaks here concerning this righteousness, much like the tenor that the Psalmist doth concerning God; “There is nothing in the new heaven but thee, and nothing in the new earth, that I look after, besides thee^u.” His brother Paul is of the same mind and song; “I do count all things but dung, that I may win Christ; and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith^v.” Offer him, as Satan once did to our Saviour, and try him with ‘hæc omnia tibi dabo;’ ‘Paul, choose through all the world what thou wilt have,—honours, riches, pleasures, profits, take what thou wilt, and have.’ ‘Lord,

^u Psal. lxxiii. 25.

^v Phil. iii. 8, 9.

let me have the righteousness, which is of God by faith.' All things in the world are but dung to it. His great Master had taught him, and teacheth us all, that this is the thing so desirable, and to be longed after; "Blessed are they, which do hunger and thirst after righteousness^w."

How shall I speak upon this subject? A theme fit to be discoursed on by the tongue of an angel, or by the tongue of a saint in glory. If a Lazarus should come out of heaven to preach on earth, as the rich man would have had him in that parable,—how would he, upon his own experience of the excellency of it, magnify this righteousness? Nay, if a Dives could return from hell to preach to his brethren, and advise them that they should not come into the place of torment,—he would tell them, that all things in the world are but dung, and there is but 'unum necessarium,'—to get that righteousness, which is of God by faith.

'Lazarus, how camest thou to heaven?' 'Why, I was justified;' "Whom he justified, them he also glorified^x." 'Dives, how camest thou to be damned?'—'Because I was not justified.'

I shall not enter into any of the various and nice disputes about justification; I shall only speak something of the incomparable excellency of it; that, if it may be, I may warm your hearts a little, in the desire and longing after it, which is so desirable, and to be longed after.

And this I shall do by considering the nature of it, and the effects, and I need to look no farther: it is, like the ark of the covenant, 'overlaid with gold, within and without.' It is all glorious within, in its own nature,—and all glorious without, in its fruits and effects. For the first, the nature of justification:—how shall I define or describe it? As the apostle doth faith^y; "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;" not so exactly defining it to speak out its whole nature, but as best applicable to his present discourse: so I of this, to speak of it according to the theme proposed, as it is desirable, and to be longed after, let me say, 'Justification is a man's being interested in all Christ's righteousness:' and if any thing be to be longed after, sure that is, to be interested in all Christ's righteousness.

Laban spake high, when he said, "All these things thou seest, are mine; these children are my children^z," &c.

^w Matt. v. 6.

^x Rom. viii. 30.

^y Heb. xi. 1.

^z Gen. xxxi. 43.

But how high and glorious is that, that may be said of a justified person? All thou hearest of Christ is thine,—his life is thine,—his death is thine,—his obedience, merit, righteousness, all is thine.—The Jews speak much when they say, All the six hundred and thirteen precepts are comprehended in ‘*Justus ex fide vivet*,’ ‘The just shall live by faith.’ But they are far from construing the thing aright, when they look for justification by their own works: and it is a monster of doctrine in their ears, that men are to be justified by the righteousness of another, and by the obedience of another.

But the gospel, as the apostle tells us, reveals that great mystery; “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith^a.” Here are two scruples: 1. Did not the law reveal the righteousness of God? How then is it ascribed to the gospel, that it reveals it? And, 2. How doth it reveal it from faith to faith?

True, indeed, the law revealed God’s condemning righteousness,—but the gospel, his justifying righteousness; the righteousness of God in a more singular excellency. Glorious is the righteousness of God in all its actings,—his condemning justice, his rewarding justice; but most singularly glorious, is his justifying justice; and this most especially is exalted in Scripture as the righteousness of God, of the choicest eminency.

And, secondly, this righteousness is revealed in the gospel ‘from faith to faith.’ How is that? I cannot take it only from one degree of faith to another, but from one kind of faith to another. The Jews, that expected justifying by their own works, yet had they a faith in God,—they believed in him, looked for good from him; but they knew not, what faith in God, through Christ, was; they looked for justifying from God, and had a faith or belief they should obtain it; but were utter strangers to justifying ‘through faith in Christ.’ This, therefore, the gospel reveals, as the great mystery of salvation,—the righteousness of God justifying a sinner; and this from immediate believing in God, to believing in him through Christ Jesus,—and from expecting justifying ‘by our own righteousness,’ to expecting justifying ‘by the righteousness of Christ.’

The apostle, in Rom. v, from ver. 12, forward, confirms that that I propose, that justification is by imputation of Christ’s righteousness; and the comparison that he there

^a Rom. i. 17.

useth, clears the matter fully. He, to open that great point of justification by the righteousness of Christ, takes a parallel, from the imputation of Adam's sin; and you may see how all along he sets the one against the other: let us speak a little to that parallel.

1. Does not the matter of imputation, in his discourse there, and, indeed, in itself, argue some 'descending relation,' as I may call it? Imputation is upon relation of descension.

He speaks of Adam's sin imputed: to whom? To them that are in relation to him in descent, all his posterity. The angels' sin is not imputed to him, nor his to angels,—nor angels' to angels,—but Adam's to all his posterity, because of their relation to him. The sin in violating the command given him, is imputed to all his posterity, because his posterity: for they all were in him, and enclosed in the covenant; for it was made not with Adam as one man, but with all human nature included in him: and so his guilt descended to them, upon that relation.

So the righteousness of Christ is imputed: to whom? To those that are related to him,—his seed, such as are born of him. The comparison of the apostle must run parallel; Adam's sin imputed to his seed, Christ's righteousness to his.

2. All the seed of Adam are made sinful alike by his sin; so all the seed of Christ are justified alike by his obedience.

Original sin hath not 'magis et minus;' but all originally sinful alike; though all not actually sinful alike. So justification hath not 'magis et minus;' but all that are justified, are justified alike. Sanctification hath its degrees. Adam's righteousness and holiness were equally perfect; but the righteousness and holiness of saints not so: for they are justified by an infinite righteousness, but they are not sanctified by an infinite holiness.

3. All the righteousness of Christ is imputed to him. Not one saint, one part,—another, another,—but every one, all. As 'anima tota in tota et tota in qualibet parte:' so all the righteousness of Christ is to all believers, and all to every one. As a million of men are in the sun, and one partakes not, one of one part of his light and beams, and another of another, but every one of all: so here, as the first enhancement of the desirableness of justification, it makes us partakers of Christ's righteousness. O, what a treasure is this!

A SERMON^a,

PREACHED AT

HERTFORD ASSIZE,

MARCH 17, 1664.

JOHN, VIII. 9.

And they, being convinced by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest even to the last.

EVEN so be it with all, that deal in falsehood, as these persons do, that are spoken of by the text. So be it with every one, who, at this time and occasion, when conscience should be stirring, and doing its just work towards the forwarding the execution of justice, can find in his heart to hinder it, or to persuade it to the contrary: any one that can swallow down, and choke his conscience with, a false oath,—any one that shall intend a false testimony, lay in a false accusation, or maintain a wrong cause. Awake conscience, awake, and do thy duty,—fly in his face, and make him blush and be ashamed; admonish, chastise, correct, and hinder him, that he, being convinced of his own conscience, may either get him out, or, at least, it may get him off from being injurious to others, or to his own soul.

There is hardly any commentator upon the gospel, or this chapter, but he will tell you, that this story of the adulterous woman was wanting, and left out of some Greek Testaments in ancient time, as appears by this,—that some of the fathers, setting themselves to expound this Gospel, make no mention at all of any part of this story. So Nonnus, turning all this Gospel into Greek verse, hath utterly left out this whole story; and so hath the Syriac New Testament, first printed in Europe; and so, Jerome tells us, did some old Latin translations. When I cast with myself, whence this omission should proceed, I cannot but think of two passages in Eusebius.

The one is in his third book of Ecclesiastical History,

^a English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1079.

the very last clause in that book,—where he relates, that one Papias, an old tradition-monger, as he characterizes him, did first bring in this story of the adulterous woman, out of a book called the ‘ Gospel according to the Hebrews.’ For so is that passage of Eusebius commonly understood.

The other is in his fourth book of the Life of Constantine^b; where he relates, that Constantine “enjoined him, and committed to his trust, to get transcribed” πεντήκοντα σωματία which the last translation renders, “fifty copies of such parts of Scripture, as, he thought, might be most useful for the churches of Constantinople:” but his Greek expression seems rather to mean fifty copies of the gospel, compacted into one body, by way of ‘harmonizing’ them together: which I am the rather induced to believe, partly, because of those ‘Canones Eusebiani,’ which are so famous, and were in tendency to such a purpose: partly, because he relates, that he finished the work according to the emperor’s command, and sent him the books τρισσὰ καὶ τετρασσὰ ‘by ternions et quaternions:’ which seems to mean, three or four evangelists compacted together, according as they jointly related the story.

Now, if Eusebius believed, that this story was introduced by Papias, as he seems to do,—you may well conclude, that he would be sure to leave out this story, in all his ‘fifty copies,’ which he thought unfit to be compiled with the evangelical story, as having no better authority, than the introduction of it by such a man. Or, if the ages before Eusebius were of the same belief with him in this matter, you may see, why this story might also be wanting in those times.

But I shall not trouble you about this matter, which is now past all dispute. For I believe, it is hardly possible in all the world, to find now a printed New Testament, either in the original Greek, or in any other language, either eastern or western, wherein this story is not inserted without any question. Nor had the thing been ever disputed, if the story itself had been searched to the bottom; for then, of itself, it would have vindicated its own authority, to be evangelical and divine.

It tells of a woman taken in adultery, in the ‘very act,’—I could easily be persuaded to say, and ‘in the very temple

^b Chap. 36, 37.

too.' For as our Saviour saith, "They had made that 'house of prayer, a den of thieves,'" so, I doubt, they made it sometimes a 'nest of whores.' And at this time, there was offered an extraordinary occasion and opportunity for such a lewdness. For, as the chapter preceding tells you, at ver. 37, that the day next before this occurrence, was 'the great and last of the feast of tabernacles,'—so the Jews' records will tell you, that that night, as also others of the same feast, was spent by the chief men in the nation, in dancing, singing, sporting, and even revelling in the temple-court, vast companies of men and women looking on. Now, if such night-work as that, did produce such a deed of darkness as this, it was no wonder:—but I leave this as not asserted.

The scribes and Pharisees bring this woman to Christ, as he sat teaching in the temple, to have his sentence upon her, as, it is like, she was first brought to them to have theirs. If I should construe 'the scribes and Pharisees' here, for 'the members of the Sanhedrim,' or 'bench of judicature,' it might plead the warrant of the words of our Saviour, Matt. xxiii. 2, —where he useth the same expression, in the same sense: "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' chair;" i. e. 'the Sanhedrim sit in Moses' legislative magistratical seat.' As, also, the warrant of his words, in this very story, where, asking the woman, "Hath no man condemned thee,"—he seems to intimate, that those, that accused her, had also power to judge and condemn her. However, it is well known, that 'scribes and Pharisees,' in Scripture-language, speak 'the men of the most eminency and dignity in the nation.'

They propose the case to Christ, as a point of scruple, though they intend something worse in it. "This woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us, that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou?" And, indeed, there were two scruples in the case.

One was, as to a point in their civil law,—viz. whether a woman, taken in the very act of adultery, might not have the benefit of divorce, as well as a woman apprehended an adulteress by some other discovery:—since that permission of divorce, was to mitigate the sharpness of the law, of putting her to death.

The second was, as to a point of civil policy, which you

may pick out of their words to Pilate^b; “The Jews said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.” It is very generally understood, as if they meant, that the Romans had taken away from them the power of capital punishments. But the Jews, more truly, give the reason of it,—viz. that murderers and malefactors were grown so numerous, and headstrong, and so strong a party, that the Sanhedrim could not, durst not, execute justice upon them. And let me add one other record of theirs, which suits with the thing we are upon,—namely, they say, That adulterers grew so common, so innumerable, that they were glad to lay aside that practice, by trying the adulterous wife, by giving her to drink the bitter waters prescribed by God, in the fifth of Numbers: and that Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai, who, I doubt not, was of the Sanhedrim at this very time, caused it to be laid aside, alleging that saying of the prophet Hosea^c, “I will not punish your daughters, when they commit whoredom,—nor your spouses, when they commit adultery.”

Now, take it either way, whether the Romans had taken away the power of capital punishments out of their hands, or malefactors had overpowered it, that it durst not act,—a just scruple arose in this case, what to do with this woman?

But these men come not for resolution of questions, but for catching advantages; which Christ well knoweth; and, therefore, gives them no answer,—“but stooped down, and, with his finger, wrote on the ground.” Our English hath added, “as though he heard them not;” which is rarely to be found in any Greek Testaments. Some few, indeed, have *μὴ προσποιούμενος*, ‘as not regarding:’—which might very well have been spared; since Christ, when he had showed, that he heard and regarded, by saying to them, “Whosoever is without sin, let him cast the first stone,” yet “he stoops down, and writes on the ground again.”

An action and gesture that seems so strange to Beza, that he plainly professeth, that, for this very passage, he had a suspicion of the whole story, that it is not gospel. It may be, it seemed to him too like the gesture of David, scrabbling on the walls and doors in a dissembled frantickness. But if he had turned the other end of his perspective, it would have looked more like God’s writing with his finger on the two tables of stone; for the temple-floor was stone also.

^b John, xviii. 31.

^c Chap. iv. 14.

Some, on the other hand, as confident, as he was suspicious, will tell you 'verbatim' what it was that Christ wrote: who let enjoy their confidence and fancy. It is enough for us, if we can discover why he wrote, and what his intent was in this gesture. To the discovery of which, let me observe these things to you:—

I. That as the trial of an adulterous wife is the thing that is in transaction,—so Christ acteth in some conformity to the trial of the adulterous wife prescribed by God, in the fifth of Numbers. And much like, if I mistake not, did Moses act in the trial of spiritual adultery, the idolatry with the golden calf. In Exod. xxxii. 27, he saith to the sons of Levi, "Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour." Now, how could they know, among so many thousands, who were guilty? Why, as the adulterous wife, drinking the water, mixed with the dust of the sanctuary-floor, gave evidence of her guilt by her belly's swelling; so Moses, by God's direction, beats the calf to powder, strews the powder upon the water of the brook that descended out of the mount^d, causes the people to drink of it; and, probably, God caused some like token to appear upon the faulty.

II. The Jews have a maxim, in reference to the trial of the suspected wife, most agreeable to sense and reason,—viz. that her trial proved of no effect, unless her husband, that accused and tried her, were himself free from unchastity. Though she, indeed, had played the whore, and though she drank the 'bitter waters,' and the priest denounced the curse appointed to be denounced,—yet that all had no effect upon her to make her belly to swell, and her thigh to rot, if her husband were an adulterer too, or a defiled person.

Our Saviour acts here directly according to the equity of this maxim, and sets himself purposely to try these accusers, who accused the woman, and brought her to be tried. As if he had thus spoken out unto them; "You have brought this woman to me for me to sentence her, as a judge; but who made me a judge or a magistrate among you? But let me act this once, as personating the priest that was to try the suspected wife, and let me go by the equity of your own

^d Dent. ix. 21.

rule: you say, the trial of an adulterous wife proved to no effect upon her, to bring her to condign punishment, if her husband were guilty of the like crime. You accuse this woman, and put her upon my trial;—are you yourselves free from the like fault? If you be, stone her. ‘He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone.’ But if you be not, expect not that this her trial should be of effect to her condign punishment; because you, the accusers, are guilty of the like fault, or of some such notorious fault yourselves.”

If we should strictly understand the words, “He that is without sin,” for ‘he that is without the guilt of this same sin of unchastity, among you,’ it were but agreeable to the construction of the phrase, Luke vii. 37; “A woman in the city that was a sinner;” which is commonly understood, ‘a common strumpet.’ And it were agreeable to that title, that Christ once and again puts upon that generation, calling it ‘a wicked and adulterous generation:’—and it were but agreeable to the lascivious temper of the nation, as I observed before. But take it to mean some other notorious crimes, you see our Saviour’s dealing is exactly according to the equity of that maxim mentioned,—viz. no trial of the adulterous wife to condemn her, if the husband, that accused her, be an adulterer himself.

III. Whereas the priest, in the trial of the suspected wife, was to stoop down and take of the dust of the sanctuary, to make her drink it; and he was to write the curses he denounced against her, in a book; the gesture of our Saviour here remembers both. His stooping down, and making the pavement of the temple as his book, and writing in the dust there something, most likely bitter and grievous against them he tried.

IV. The trying priest wrote the curses in the book; and, as soon as he had done, he blotted them out with the bitter waters again: because the matter was doubtful, that he was upon, whether the woman were guilty or no: if she were guilty, then there were curses written;—if she were not, then they were blotted out. But here Christ is sure of the guilt of the persons he puts to trial; and therefore he writes not, and blots out again,—but he writes, and he writes again. And herein he imitates the acting of the trying priest again. For he, as the Jews expound his acting, first denounced the curses, then made the woman drink the bitter waters, and

then he denounces the same curses again. So Christ stoops down, and writes some such thing, it is like, of the same nature, and then portions these, whom he tries, with that draught, that went down so bitter with them, “He that is without sin,” &c. and then stoops down, and writes again; which while he is doing, “They, being convinced by their own consciences, went out one by one,” &c.

I have been the longer upon the whole story, partly to unfold these things that are most material in it, which, it may be, every eye doth not observe in reading of it,—and partly, to vindicate it to its native and genuine authority of evangelical and divine. And now, to speak of the words and passage in the text.

The first gloss we may make upon them, may be in silence and wonder. For *παράδοξα σήμερον*, you hear of strange things in it.

1. That the consciences of such men as these, should be brought to any conviction at all, men sworn to mischief, and to be unconscionable.

2. That so many such consciences should be convinced all alike, and altogether, and all at one stroke. For the very words intimate, that they were some number, and that conviction seized upon the whole number.

3. That they should be convinced with these few words, “He that is without sin,” &c. when they had taken no thoughts of any such thing before.

4. That they should be so overpowered by conviction, as, to their own shame before the multitude, to proclaim their guilt by departing away, and not standing to it.

But, by way of doctrine hence,

So little is any man able to stand before, or to stand against, the conviction of his own conscience, when Christ is resolved to set it on.

And this is that I shall insist upon out of the words; which ariseth very pregnantly out of them, and lieth very plain in them to be observed: that “little is any man able to stand before, or to stand against, the conviction of his own conscience, when Christ sets it on.”

Think you, that if the poor guilty delinquent, that stood now at the bar, had spoken the very same words to them that our Saviour doth, that they would have had the same effect upon them? Had she said, “He that is without sin among

you, let him cast the first stone at me ;” do you think they would have parted with conviction of conscience, as they did? Their answer to another poor person, that was innocent, that went about a little to instruct them, “Thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou go about to teach us,—” in the next chapter, may give you a guess what their answer would have been, if she had gone about thus to try them ;—“Thou, a whore, just now taken in the act of adultery, and dost thou go about to reprove us?” But it is Christ that speaks the words ; and Christ resolved to set conviction home upon them, to shame them before the company, and to confound them in their own conscience : and, therefore, he sends thunder with his lightning, adds his power to his word ; and with these two edges of the sword of his mouth he cuts so keen, that they are neither able to avoid the stroke, nor to abide it. ‘So little is any man able to stand before, or to stand against, the conviction of his own conscience, when Christ is resolved to set it on.’

For the proof and attestation of this truth, I might call for all the mourning men and mourning women, that ever were in the world, either under the torture or horror of conscience, or under the pangs of remorse. I might call even heaven and hell to bear witness to it ; either the saints in glory, that have been here so convinced of their duty, that they were not able, nay, not so much as to be willing, to stand against it : or the damned in hell, eternally so convinced of their guilt and condition, that they are utterly unable to stand before it.

But, as he once that had received an unjust sentence of death against himself from a wicked judicature, cited all his sentencers, within such a time, to answer God and him ; so let me make such a challenge :—what conscience soever is here, or in all the world, that is most unconscionable, that can swear and forswear, lie and oppress, whore and drink, or commit any sin without remorse or feeling ; whosoever is come, or shall come, to this present meeting and occasion, with intent to take a false oath, to bear false witness, to lay in a false plea, or to maintain a wrong cause ;—I challenge every such a person, every such a conscience, at one time or other, either in this life, or within a moment after he is departed out of it, to bear witness, and to subscribe to this truth, “That little is any one able to stand before, or against, the conviction of his own conscience,” &c.

To speak of conviction of conscience at such a time and meeting as this, is to speak of an assize in the soul at the assize of the county, of conviction of conscience at a time when conscience and conviction had need to be stirring in a special manner: a subject for discourse very agreeable to the occasion, could I but frame a discourse adequate to the subject. But I must crave your help and assistance for such a work; that, as I am to speak of conscience and conviction, so your consciences would go along, and speak also to it, and make out, in the discourse of your own conscience, what I speak too short concerning conscience or conviction: that whereas all that I can speak, will be but as a very short note in the index, you would turn into the book of your hearts, and see how largely you can read it there.

You see, thereby, three things plainly before us to speak unto,—‘conviction of conscience,’ and ‘Christ’s setting it on,’ and ‘man unable to withstand such setting on.’ No one of which but might take up more time in discourse, than is allotted; and, therefore, I shall twist all together in these considerations:—

I. First; Being to speak of ‘conviction of conscience,’ I may begin much after that enigmatical style, that the Apocalyptic useth, in speaking of the ‘eighth beast^e’; where he saith, “That he was, and is not, and yet he is.” So, there is conviction of conscience, that is not conviction, and yet it is. As there are too many in the world, that have no conscience at all, and yet have a conscience. As Absalom’s long hair signified he was a Nazarite, and under a vow: but Nazarism in an Absalom, signified as good as nothing;—and yet, as to his condemning, it signified something.

There is conviction of conscience, if we may call it ‘conviction of conscience,’ that is, a thing without life, without feeling, without fruit, like Pharaoh’s thin ears of corn, that sprang up like ears of corn, but are blasted as soon as sprung up, and are empty, and come to nothing. Conscience and memory are so lodged together in the faculty of the understanding, as two infants laid together, in one and the same cradle, that conscience cannot but receive some jogging, some motion, some touch from its cradle-fellow, and its cradle.

The profanest wretch that is, cannot but sometimes be

^e Rev. xvii. 8.

told by his own heart, that he hath done evil, and that he doth not well; he cannot but remember, that he hath committed such and such abominable actions; he cannot but be convinced, he hath done what he should not,—that he hath incurred guilt and danger in so doing; he cannot but be convinced he should do otherwise; and yet, all this while, he hath no impression upon his heart, no remorse, no amending, but doth the same things still and still. Here is a spark of conviction, struck out between the flint and steel, between his memory and understanding, and it lights into the tinder of his conscience: but this is damp and dead, that it takes no fire, and the spark presently goes out and dies:—a blasted conviction, like Pharaoh's thin ears; an abortive conviction, *ἔκτρομα*, in the apostle's language, though in another case, “a thing born out of due form,” conviction born dead, and not shaped or formed to the feature of a due conviction. I may compare it to letters written in paper, with the juice of a lemon, out of which you cannot spell either sentence or sense, without bringing it to the fire: and fire, in time, will make these letters legible to him, that now will see nothing in them.

II. Secondly; There is a conviction of conscience, that brings with it some overpowering, some more, some less,—some for one end, some for another. I say, ‘some overpowering:’—in that dispute, about the resistibility or irresistibility of grace, as far as I can see into the dispute, this distinction might be useful and advantageous towards the determining of it,—viz. to consider, what the Spirit of God doth to the heart, by way of trying it; and what it doth, with intent and resolution to overpower it. The former part of the distinction you have in Exod. xx. 20; “Fear not, for the Lord is come to prove,” or try, “you.” The latter in Isa. xxvi. 11; “They will not see; but they shall see, and be ashamed.” The former in Rev. iii. 20; “Christ stands at the door and knocks,” to try, whether he shall be entertained. The latter, in Ezek. xxii. 14; “How can thy heart endure, and thy hands be strong, in the day that I shall deal with thee,”—when I break in, resolved to overpower thee? As in that blasted conviction, I spake of before,—there was a trying, but no overpowering,—so there is some overpowering conviction also, that is but for trial.

There was some overpowering conviction upon the con-

sciences of those men in the text, and that in a very great degree, when it packed them out of the room and company; but this was far from overpowering them to the utmost end of conviction; but it was only by way of trial, how they would improve this conviction to that utmost end. So, that was a very overpowering conviction upon the conscience of Herod, that made him reverence John Baptist, and to "hear him gladly," and to "do many things," according to his doctrine; but it was far from attaining the utmost end of conviction: it was only by way of trial, whether he would come up to the utmost end or no. This conviction, neither they in the text nor Herod could resist; for conviction brake in, whether they would or no; but the ultimate operation of conviction they resisted; because, in this conviction, the Spirit of God did only try them, not resolved to overpower them to the utmost fruit and effect of conviction.

III. Thirdly; Now, the ultimate effect of conviction is double and diverse, according to the duplicity and diversity of the matter of conviction itself; namely, when the conscience is convinced of its condition, or when it is convinced of its duty. The former so, that it is awaked, like Jonah, with a storm, and not able to stand before the conviction, but is broke all to pieces by terror and torture: the latter, that it is not able to stand against the conviction, but is overcome and overpowered to close with its duty.

I shall illustrate the former, by comparing the case with a known story,—and the latter, by speaking to a case of conscience worth the knowing.

For the first, it is well known how God tried the hearts and consciences of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, by Moses's words and miracles,—and how, again and again, he in some degree did overpower them; but still they resisted, and came not up to the proper and ultimate effect of conviction, to own and to do their duty. At last, he brings them into the horror of three days' darkness: and, in that darkness, they are haunted with dreadful and horrid apparitions of fiends and devils. For, observe^f, when the Holy Ghost is reckoning up the plagues of Egypt,—and, instead of mentioning the plague of darkness in express terms, he mentions that that was the very quintessence of that plague, "He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indigna-

^f Psal. lxxviii. 49.

tion, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them." What conviction, think ye, these men's consciences were struck withal, in the sense of their condition, when they are so overborne with it, and even crushed all to pieces with horror, and are brought even into the suburbs of hell? They felt the "fierceness of the anger, wrath, and indignation" of the Lord; they saw his dreadful executioners about them, fiends and devils: and they are all the while chained up in fetters of darkness, that they cannot outrun their horror: they cannot abide the horrid confutation of conscience they are under, nor can they avoid it. Ah! woe, woe, woe, to the people, to the person, who is in such a case!

And to such a case doth God sometimes bring the consciences of men, even in this life, though not exactly in the very same kind of execution. Who hath read the story of Spira? Does he not see him, and his conscience, in as dreary a condition as these men, though not in the very same way of tormenting? What ails Lamech, to howl so horribly^g, that he had slain young and old, and undone the world, by the cursed example of his polygamy,—that he is in seventy and sevenfold more cursed condition than Cain, who had slain only one Abel?—Lamech, what is the matter? Oh, conviction, conviction of conscience, set on with such horror, that it grinds his soul even to powder, and he cannot stand before it, he cannot stand under it.—What ails thee, Judas, to confess thy fact against thyself, with so much sadness and confusion of spirit? Why cast down thy thirty pieces of silver, which thou hadst got so notoriously, and bought so dully?—'Oh! conviction of mine own conscience, which bears me down, and lies heavier on my soul, than a thousand thousand millstones.' "They shall say to the rocks, Fall on us,—and to the hills, Cover us." And those weights seem lighter than the burden of conscience, that lies upon them.

Here is conviction of conscience, overpowering "*ad ultimum quod sic*," as far as possible, in that kind; and, as far as possible in this world: a man, so thoroughly convinced of his lost, undone, damnable condition, that his conviction is his hell already, and he cannot suffer or feel more of hell till he come there. But,

Secondly, There is a conviction of conscience, overpowering to the utmost effect of conviction, that is smoother,

^g Gen. iv. 23, 24.

like Jacob, and not such a rough thing as this Esau: a child of the free-woman, and of the promise, and not of this spirit of horror and bondage: and that is, when a man is so convinced in conscience, concerning his duty, that he cannot, but with all earnestness, set to it and keep to it. As^h, "The word of the Lord was in my heart, as a burning fire shut up in my bones, that I was weary of forbearing and could not stay." This I shall illustrate to you, by looking into a case or state of conscience, referring something to the conviction spoken of last before; and, also, to this we are speaking of now.

Many a dear child of God walks in darkness, and sees no light, from the time of his new birth to his grave; he walks in brokenness of heart, and dejection of spirit, and never sees good day. His example may be instance enough for all others; "I am afflicted, and ready to die; even from my youth up, I suffer thy terrors. I am distracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me, and thy terrors have cut me off. They came round about me, daily, like waters; they compassed me about togetherⁱ." Now, what is that, that bears such a soul up, that it does not sink under despondency and despair? It is a wonder, that such a one can live,—and what is it that he lives upon? Upon the strong and overpowering conviction and sense of his duty.—Every child of God, that is born to God by the new birth, is in Rebekah's case, with a Jacob and Esau struggling in her, but the younger overcomes the elder. He hath a twofold overpowering of conscience in him,—namely, concerning his lost condition, and concerning his duty, and the latter overcomes the former. He hath those pangs and anguishes of conscience, through the sight of his sins, and sense of God's displeasure, that it brings him to the very brink of hell, and of the gulf of despair; but he hath withal so strong an impression of his duty, that that keeps him from sinking or falling in.

A traveller towards heaven walks upon two legs,—hope, and sense of his duty. Now, many and many a time, his hope, like Jacob's thigh, is sinew-shrunk and lame, and hath no strength at all in it; yet he makes shift to bear upon his other leg, the sense of his duty, that, Jacob-like, at last, he limps out to his journey's end. The hope of a good soul may be in the dark, that he cannot see the glimmering of

^h Jer. xx. 9.

ⁱ Psal. lxxxviii. 15—17.

the least spark of it,—but the sense of his duty is always in his sight, that he cannot but look on it, and walk after it.

The case of Jonah in the whale's belly^k; “I said, I am cut off from the light.” Why, Jonah, then thy case is desperate, and there is no hope. “‘But I will yet look towards thy holy temple.’ That is my duty, and I must not give out from it.” As the good man in Psal. lxxxviii, thou seest, thou hast waited, and prayed, and laboured for comfort all thy time, and no comfort comes; there is no hope, strive no longer. ‘Aye, but it is my duty to wait, and pray, and labour; and I must hold to that, and not give out.’ Job, dost thou not see thy hopeless case? dost thou still hold thine integrity, blessing God and dying? “‘Ah! thou speakest like a fool (saith he); though God kill me,’ yet will I trust in him, I will wait on him; this is my duty, and I must do it.”

Oh! this is worth your laying to heart. If ever your case come to despond in hopes and comforts, yet to bear up with this,—‘Though I cannot see it is the will of God, to show me comfort,—yet I am sure it is his will, that I should hold out in doing my duty. I long for assurance of pardon of my sins, and cannot find it. I pray, and wait, and labour for grace, and hope, and comfort, and cannot feel it. My heart is as sad as ever; as dull, as slippery, as incumbered as ever; yet, come what will, I must not leave my hold,—I must pray, and wait, and labour still; it is my duty.’ Thus hath many a sad soul been borne up under despondencies, that have seen no light, hope, nor comfort; that it hath been a wonder, how they have holden up: yet have lived upon a ‘hidden manna,’ as in Rev. ii. 17; have been borne up upon this crutch,—the overpowering conviction of their conscience concerning their duty.

IV. Fourthly; Every conscience in the world must, at one time or other, come to such ultimate conviction, in the one kind or other, either to confusion and horror, or to conversion and setting to his duty. “Cain, if thou do well, shalt thou not be accepted? but if thou do not well, sin lies at the door^l.” The word, in the original, signifies ‘sin,’ but more commonly a ‘sin-offering,’ and that ‘laid at the door.’ And that I take to be the meaning of the place, and this to be the first doctrine of repentance in the Bible. Though thou do not well, yet there is a sin-offering to make thy peace:

^k Jonah, ii. 4.

^l Gen. iv. 7.

repent, and thou shalt be pardoned; but if thou do not repent, sin and vengeance lies at the door, ready to seize upon thee. Sinner, if thou improvest trying conviction, as thou oughtest to do,—thou mayest come to the kindly, overpowering conviction to set thee to thy duty, for thy everlasting comfort; but if not, expect overpowering conviction, at one time or other, to thy eternal horror. And to this sense, could I easily be induced to believe those borrowed expressions of Daniel mean^m; “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake,—some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contemptⁿ:” a resurrection of ‘dead consciences,’ as well as ‘dead bodies.’ Conscience, of itself, is one of the sleepest things in the world, if God would let it sleep; but he will suffer no conscience to sleep for ever. But up, sluggard; ‘Jonah, why sleepest thou?’ either call upon thy God, and betake thyself to thy duty,—or into the sea of horror and confusion, and sink, and be drowned.

And so much be spoken, or rather so little of much that might be spoken, concerning the first thing that lay before us to be spoken to,—viz. conviction of conscience.

^m Dan. xii. 2.

ⁿ John, v. 28, 29.

A SERMON^o,

PREACHED AT

HERTFORD ASSIZE-TIME,

JULY 16, 1665.

JOHN, XIV. 2.

In my Father's house are many mansions, &c.

THE words are the words of our Saviour, and much mistaken (if I am not much mistaken) by many, as to the time when they were spoken,—and by many, as to their sense which they intend. The first verse of the thirteenth chapter, and the last verse of this, state the time of their speaking; and the consideration of the case of the persons, to whom they were spoken, must state their meaning.

Very many conceive, that the story of the foregoing chapter, was at the Passover-supper; that it was at the Passover-supper, when Christ washed his disciples' feet, gave Judas the sop, and foretold Peter of his denial: whereas the very first words in that chapter do plainly tell, it was before the feast of the Passover came; and the nine-and-twentieth verse of it tells us, that when our Saviour said to Judas, 'What thou doest, do quick,' the disciples thought he meant, "Buy those things, that we have need of against the feast," which was not yet come.

Matthew and Mark resolve us both of the time and place,—namely, that it was not at the Passover, but two days before; and that it was not at Jerusalem, but at Bethany, two miles off^p. Two days, therefore, before the Passover, at Bethany, at a common supper, Christ's head is anointed,—he washeth the disciples' feet,—Judas receives the sop, and the devil with it,—goes in the night to Jerusalem, and plots for the betraying of his Master against the Passover come. And after his departure, Christ speaks of his own departure from them, and tells Peter, "The cock shall not crow, till thou have denied me thrice."

^o English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1086.

^p Matt. xxvi. 2. 6. Mark, xiv. 1. 3.

That very passage hath bred that mistake about the time, as if it were on the Passover-night, and that no cock should crow, till Peter had so denied him. Whereas it is apparent, that he denied him but once before the cock crew^p; and that he denied him twice after the cock had once crowed. But our Saviour's meaning is,—That he should deny him thrice in the time of cock-crowing.

This matter is the more material for consideration, because of that assertion of some, that Judas received the sop at the Passover-supper, but that he stayed not till the administration of the Lord's supper, but went out; whereas, indeed, he had received the sop, two nights before the Passover-supper came.

At the same place, at Bethany, though not exactly at the same time, with the story before, Christ utters his discourse of this chapter: and you see how he concludes his discourse, at the last verse of the chapter, "Arise, let us go hence," that is, from Bethany to Jerusalem, on the Passover-day.

He begins his discourse of this chapter, with "Let not your hearts be troubled," &c. and presently comes on with the words of the text, "In my Father's house are many mansions." About the juncture of which words, there is some scruple. Some apply them thus, 'Though I go alone, yet there is room for you also, where I go.' Others thus, "That whereas he had said to Peter^q, 'Thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterward,' he saith now to the rest, 'Let not your hearts be troubled; there are many mansions in my Father's house;' there is room for you, as well as for Peter." Some understand 'many mansions' so, for 'much room;' some for 'divers degrees of glory.'

But we shall the better discover the bent of his words, if we observe the three stays, that he gives to their troubled minds in the three first verses. We must take notice withal of the three things, that might especially trouble their minds. The three stays are, 'Believe in me:—' 'In my Father's house:—' 'I will come to take you.'—And of the discomfiture, that troubled their minds,

I. The first, and not the least, was, that he had told them that he was going from them; and that could not but go

^p Mark, xiv. 68, and forward.

^q John, xiii. 36.

very near their hearts: so loving, so divine a Master, to be taken away from their heads. They had forsaken all to follow him, and he now to forsake them, that they can follow him no more: they no more to enjoy the sweet delight of his company, the saving and savoury flavour of his discourses, and rare example of his life and converse! Of all this they were very sensible,—but most of all, that he should be taken from them in such a manner. As the children of the prophets said to Elisha, “Knowest thou, that thy master, this day, will be taken from thine head?”—“Disciples, know ye, that your Master will presently be taken from you?”—“Yes, we know it, he hath told us so.”—“But do you apprehend, that he is to be taken from you by such a shameful, cruel, horrid death?”—That he was to be taken away from them at all, how might it justly *trouble* their hearts; but *overwhelm* their hearts, if they knew the manner how!

Against this sadness he cheers them with all the arguments and comforts, that we meet with in the text and context: “Ye will not see me any more, yet ‘believe in me:’ I go from you, but ‘I go to prepare a place for you.’ Though I leave you, yet I do not forsake you, for ‘I will come, and take you to myself.’” But, besides this,

There was a twofold trouble and discomfiture might lie upon their hearts, by looking upon themselves with reflection upon two common and received opinions and tenets of the nation; in which they themselves had been trained up, even from their infancy, till they met with their Master.

And the first was, that ‘if a Jew forsook his Judaism, he should have no part in the world to come.’—A sour sauce, that, no doubt, the unbelieving Jews would lay in the dish of the disciples, and all other of the nation, that were turned Christians. “O! ye have forsaken your religion; and what will become of you?” The apostle’s discourse^r seems directly to face such a reproach, “I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that sleep; that ye sorrow not, as others, that have no hope.” What, were they Sadducees, that denied any resurrection? And did they account them that were dead, to be dissolved into nothing, and quite lost and gone? Or, acknowledging the resurrection, did they think, their fellow-Christians, that were dead, were gone to perdition, and were in a damned estate? Or,

^r In 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14.

was not this old Jewish maxim rather cast in their teeth (for the first foundation of this Thessalonian church was of Jews); “You and your sect have turned your back upon your Judaism, and forsaken your religion; and where are they that are dead? and what will become of you, when you die? when, as you have been taught from your childhood, ‘He that forsaketh his Judaism, shall have no part in the world to come.’ You forsooth, to follow a certain Jesus,—have forsaken the religion of your fathers; and what will you do in the latter end, when ye come to die?”—“Why (saith the apostle), doubt not, ‘but as many as sleep in Jesus, Jesus will bring with him,’ and raise them, even as God raised Jesus.”

Now, this might trouble the minds of the apostles. They had forsaken their Judaism,—and turned their backs upon the religion, they had been trained up in from their cradle, to follow the new doctrine and precepts of their Master: and now their Master is going from them: and what have they to comfort themselves against that dagger-doctrine, ‘He that forsakes his Judaism,’ &c? why, “‘Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God,’ be not afraid to ‘believe also in me,’ on the terms, that I have told you, even to the forsaking of your Judaism, and to the embracing of my new way of administration. For ‘in my Father’s house are many mansions:’ mansions for you that believe in me, as well as for them, that, under Judaism, believe in the Father; mansions for them under the gospel-administration, under which I have brought you, as well as for them, that are under legal administrations, which you have left. ‘If it were not so, I would have told you,’ and will not deceive you.”

III. It was a common and received doctrine and opinion of the nation, that Messiah should have a pompous kingdom; that he should give splendid entertainment to his followers upon earth, feasting, banqueting, great state, and bravery. And the apostles themselves were not yet cleared of that opinion, as appears by the request of Zebedee’s sons, that ‘one of them might sit on his right hand, and the other on his left in his kingdom:’ and by that question of the disciples, ‘Lord, wilt thou, at this time, restore the kingdom to Israel?’ &c.

^s Acts, i. 6.

Now, these poor men took Jesus, indeed, for the Messias, but as yet they have seen no such entertainment at all. They poor, and their Master poor too : he so far from giving any such treatment, that he had not where himself to lay his own head ; and they so far from finding any such entertainment, that they had met with nothing but poverty, danger, contempt, and obloquy. And now their Master is going from them ; and what is become now of their expectation of that bravery and kingdom ? Why, “ ‘ Let not your hearts be troubled ;’ I have noble entertainment for you, but that is not to be here, but ‘ in my Father’s house ;’ and thither I am going to ‘ prepare it’ and ‘ a place for you :’ and ‘ I will come again and take you to myself,’ to treat you there.”

So that reading the words with the foil and set-off of those two opinions, which help to illustrate the sense by reflection, you may observe in them these two things :—

I. That Christ’s entertainment of his people is in heaven.

II. That there they all meet in that blessed entertainment, though here they were under various and different administrations.

‘ Many mansions’ in the text, speaks not several and divided places in heaven, as the several cabins in Noah’s ark ; but it reflects upon the many administrations they were severally under upon earth : though under various and different, and almost contrary, administrations on earth, yet all meet in his Father’s house, for there are ‘ many mansions,’ and there is the place of his entertaining them.

I shall not need to prove, that by his ‘ Father’s house’ he meaneth ‘ heaven ;’ the very words following, ‘ I go to prepare,’ &c. make that plain enough. But I shall speak to both the propositions before us, as it were, twistedly together in the method, in which Christ acteth as to the things spoken of. And, first, this,

I. ‘ Christ saw it good to bring his church through various administrations of the matters of religion, and of the way of salvation.’—I say not ‘ through various religions and ways of salvation,’ but ‘ through various administrations of the matters of religion, and of the way of salvation,’—before the law, under the law, and under the gospel.

I shall not need to clear this in particulars ; it is so conspicuous, and so well known to all, that it were but expense of time to insist upon the proof of it. Only let me say this

upon it,—that God used these various administrations to his church according to the diversity of the age of that mystical body,—childhood,—nonage,—and consistency. And this the apostle speaks plainly for me, Gal. iv, at the beginning; where he tells us, that “as the heir, in nonage, differs nothing from a servant, but is under tutors, and governors, and subjection,—so we, when we were children, that is, while Christ’s body was under age, were in bondage under the rudiments of the world, till the fulness of time came.” Before the law, the church was in its childhood, small and little, confined within the compass of one or few families: and then God brought it up upon his own knees, documenting it (as a mother does her child, before she sends it to school) with his own lively voice, in visions, revelations, or his own words spoken from heaven.

When it grew bigger, and so very numerous in Egypt, God then set it forth to school, under the written law,—a ‘schoolmaster,’ as the apostle calls it,—and a sharp one too: and it was no more than needed, that it should be put under the lash and ferula of so severe a discipline. For now the youth began to wax wanton, and to forsake God, that had so tenderly brought it up,—and to betake itself to the idols of Egypt, as Ezekiel tells you in his twentieth chapter. Therefore, to school, child, to school, under the lash of a severe law, to keep under that youthfulness, that was so ready to grow exorbitant.

And, in this school, the church, yet under age, was under a twofold administration,—viz. under the law, with prophets and revelations under the first temple,—and under the law, without prophets and revelations under the second.

At last, comes in the gospel; and the church is taken from school, and put to the university; and now it comes up to perfect manliness; the Gentiles are called in, and that makes up the complete body. It might be an inquiry, why the church was to grow up towards consistency three thousand nine hundred twenty-eight years, viz. ere Christ came?

That is, “the perfect man and the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,” which the apostle speaks of, Ephes. iv. 13; which some conceive to mean ‘the stature of the bodies of the saints, when they shall rise from the dead, just proportionated to the stature of Christ’s body, when he died;’ which is as far from the meaning of the apo-

stle, as it is from hence to the resurrection: but he means the perfect growth and full stature of Christ's mystical body, the church, which was growing up from generation to generation, and now, when the Gentiles came in their full conflux, was come to its full consistency and manhood.

And of the same body, is his meaning in that obscure and much-mistaken place, Rom. viii. 23; "And not only they," i. e. 'the whole creation,' or *πάντα κτίσις*, 'every creature,' which means no other thing, than 'the Gentile or heathen world;' "not only they groan to come into the evangelical liberty of the children of God,—but we, also, of the Jewish nation, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the redemption,—to wit, the adoption of our body:" we wait for the redeeming and adopting of the Gentiles, to make up our mystical body.

To the same sense, is the meaning of the same apostle, in that also mistaken place, Heb. xi. 40; "That they, without us, should not be perfect." He little means, that they that believed before the coming of Christ, were not perfectly saved; as the Papists from thence would prove their limbo: but his meaning is,—They, without us, were not the perfect body of Christ; but we, under the gospel, came in to make that up: nor they so perfect in the doctrine of salvation, as under the revealing of the gospel at our coming in. So that this is the first thing,—that Christ saw good, to bring his church through various administrations.

II. Secondly, Though the manner of administration were thus various, yet the way of salvation in them, all but one and the same,—viz. by faith in Christ:—as the apostle plainly evidenceth in the chapter just now cited, Heb. xi. As the brazen oxen under the laver, their faces looked several ways, but their hinder parts met in one centre under the laver,—so these administrations, indeed, looked divers ways, without law, with law,—with prophets, without prophets,—without gospel, with gospel,—yet agreed in all one and the same centre, 'faith in Jesus Christ.' I have a large field before me, to show, that all the holy ones, that lived and died before Christ, were saved by believing in Christ. But I shall confine myself to observe this, by a rule of contraries,—namely, thus:

It is something to be wondered at, that, in our reckoning the various administrations, under which Christ brought

his church to glory, we may not number the first-born administration, that was in the world, and which, one would think, was the likeliest way to have brought to heaven; and that was, the state of innocency. But this we must except from the general rule, and leave it quite out. He that will observe, shall find, that Christ descended most of younger brothers: and, answerably, salvation descended, not from this elder brother in God's administration, that state of innocency, but something else had the birthright: Reuben lost it, and it descended to Joseph.

It was never God's intent, to bring men to salvation, by the way of innocence, in which Adam was created. This appears plain enough by the issue. Nay, did God bring the holy angels to salvation, by the way of the perfection of their nature, in which they were created? Merely being in heaven, doth not denominate 'salvation.' The angels that fell, were there; and it proved but little heaven to them. And merely beholding God face to face, doth not denominate salvation: for we have no cause to think, but the angels that fell, had beheld his face, as well as they that stood: but this is salvation, to "behold him as he is," and "to be like unto him^a." *Like him*, not in infinity, omnipotency, ubiquity; but like him in holiness, "holy as he is holy." Now, though Adam was like unto him by creation, being formed in his image,—and the angels like unto him by creation, as eminently also carrying the same image; yet herein both come short of that image, that doth consummate the saints and angels in glory,—viz. that though they were perfectly holy by creation, yet they were not unchangeably holy: for unchangeableness was not to be found in created nature. And what the holy man, in the Book of Job, saith, concerning wisdom, we may say concerning immutability: where is unchangeableness to be found, and where is the place of immutability? "The sea saith, It is not in me; and the earth saith, It is not in me." Men say, It is not in us; the angels say, It is not in us; but the truth saith, It is only in God.

Therefore, to bring men and angels into the estate of glory, that, set infinity aside, they should be like unto God, perfectly holy, and unchangeably holy, as God is holy,—eternally holy, as God is holy; it was needful, not to leave them bottomed only upon the excellency of their created

^a 1 John, iii. 2.

natures, be that never so excellent,—but to ingraff, and, as I may say, incorporate them, even into the unchangeable God himself, the Lord Christ. The saints in glory are unchangeable; how? Both in nature and affection, their estate unchangeable; yea, their very thoughts, which were so unfixed and fluid, become unchangeable. They are so infinitely ravished with the beauty and love of God, in beholding him as he is, that they cannot turn the least thought away or aside from him. And they are so ingrafted and united into Christ, that the corruptibleness of them being now laid aside, they are become unchangeable, as Christ himself is unchangeable. The angels that fell, wanted this uniting; so that, though they beheld the face of God, yet their hearts turned away from him: because they had no other uniting to God, than what lay in their own created holiness,—which was changeable, and soon changed.

So that, I say, God never intended to bring man to salvation, by the way of created innocency, because he intends to glorify grace, and not nature, and to bottom all that were to be saved, upon Christ, and not on themselves. It may seem strange, that Adam, when his wife had brought in sin and death into the world, should name her ‘Eve,’ ‘Life;’ whereas, before, he had only named her ‘Woman.’ “Call me not Naomi, but call me Marah,” might she very well have said unto him; ‘Call me not *life*, but call me *death* and misery, for I have been the unhappy introducer of both.’ But Adam had now heard of Christ; he had received his promise; and laid hold on it, and found a better life now, by him, than before.

And to this refers that in John i. 4; “In him was life, and that life was the light of men.” In the verse next before, he had said, “All things were made by him; and, without him, was nothing made that was.” Had, then, all living things, that were created, their life from him? What need he, then, to add, “in him was life?” Namely, because he intends that life in Christ, that we are speaking of. Which life (he saith) was “the light of men: and the light shone in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” Life in Christ, held out in the promise to Adam, was the light, that all holy men, from Adam forward, looked after and walked by. And that light shone in the darkness of man’s now sinful and undone condition. That light

shone in the darkness before the law, when there was no light of a law, but what was written in the heart of man. That light shone in the darkness of the types and figures, that were in the law, when the law was given. And that light shone in the darkness and obscurities of the cloudy prophecies of the prophets. And at last, it shone out fully, without any darkness, at his coming in the gospel, and “that (at verse the ninth) was the true light, that enlighteneth every man that came into the world,”—that enlighteneth the Gentiles, even all the world.

So that all along, even from the first day of Adam, under the various administrations, in which it pleased God to carry on this light; this was the “life and light” of men,—none but Christ,—none but Christ. They that went before him, before the law, and under the law; and they that come after, under the gospel, crying ‘Hosanna’ to him, expecting and finding salvation from him.

III. And this leads me to the third thing, we are to speak of,—viz. Christ’s entertaining all his, that thus, under these several administrations, believed in him, in his Father’s house, in salvation and eternity.

“Aye, at the last he did so,” will the Romanist say;—but, first, by your leave, were all the believers before Christ came, entertained in limbo? Truly, very coarse entertainment; when the good men had served God all the day,—and, at night, should have received their wages, there was yet none for them, but they must to limbo,—and wait yet, it may be, two or three thousand years, and then they shall be paid. Poor Abel served his Master faithfully and truly all his time, dies in his Master’s service, and for his Master’s sake; and when he comes to expect his reward in heaven,—“No, Abel, thou must to limbo, and there stay till Christ come and fetch thee out, about three thousand five hundred years after thou comest thither.” Very hard payment. And a strange business, that Abraham, whilst he lived, should converse with God as a friend, and walk and talk with him, and entertain God at his table; and, when he is dead, he is become a mere stranger to God, thrust into a hole in limbo, where is no light of God, no communion with him at all; but God and Abraham are now mere strangers.

Such mad absurdities doth the limiting of the Spirit and operation of Christ, to the bodily presence of Christ, pro-

duce and bring into the world. Such is the doctrine of transubstantiation, and such this of limbo: transubstantiation, that maintains, that there is no receiving Christ virtually in the sacrament, unless we receive him bodily, his very flesh and blood:—and this of limbo, that none went to heaven, till Christ went in his real presence to limbo, after his death, to fetch them thence, and bring them to glory.

I had thought Abraham had been in glory before. For when Christ, before his death, doth propose that parable of Abraham in joys, and Lazarus in his bosom, certainly he is proposed, not as being in limbo, but in heaven. And when Moses appears to Christ in glory^b, do you think he came out of limbo in that glory? But what need I trouble you with the confutation of such absurdities? If it be the Spirit and power of Christ, that operates for man's salvation, and not his bodily presence; if it be the fruit and effect of faith, to unite to Christ, and to bring in to the enjoyment of all the benefits of Christ, grace and glory: and if all the holy ones, under those various administrations, before the law, under the law, and under the gospel, had such faith in Christ;—what doubt can be made of their salvation, when they died, and that they were received and entertained by Christ in the mansions of his Father's house?

The last word *you*, in the text, I suppose, is that, where the emphasis especially lies. “I go to prepare a place for *you*, as I have prepared place for others before you: for Enoch, Abraham, &c. before the law; for Moses, Aaron, Joshua, David, &c. under the law; I am now going also to prepare a place for *you*; and there is a place for *you*, that are come under an administration, clean different from all theirs; for in my Father's house are many mansions.”

Being, then, to speak of Christ's entertaining all his in heaven, let me begin my discourse with ‘sursum corda,’ Christians, ‘lift up your hearts;’ that, that you have to look after, is above. It is the voice of my Beloved, ‘I am going to prepare for you in my Father's house.’—O my soul, look not after any lower preparation. The husks and druff of this world is not the provision, that Christ makes for his. And why should I feed upon onions and garlic, when, if I will seek after it, there is manna enough for me, the food of angels? ‘I am going to prepare a place for you in my Fa-

^b Luke, ix. 31.

ther's house,' is a word, that might make a soul never to be quiet till it come there; and that might make it to scorn and slight all this trash here below, in reaching out and breathing after the provisions, that are there.

Lift up your heads and hearts, ye afflicted, and dejected, and despised servants of the Lord Jesus; though your bread here be bread of affliction, and you mingle your drink with weeping; though ye walk in hunger and poverty, under derision, and persecution, and trouble; though oppressed, afflicted, tormented; yet here is enough to make amends, in the end for all:—"I go to prepare for you." Be content with your dinner of bitter herbs, and sour sauce, 'apud superos cœnaturi;' there is a supper provided for you in eternal mansions.

What entertainment Jew and millenary look for in Christ's personal reign upon earth, let them enjoy, when they can meet with it; but 'if you be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God,' preparing for you. Let us begin at the lowest step of Jacob's ladder, and climb up, gradatim, to the top of it, where it is lodged in heaven.

First, This world is not a place for Christ's entertaining of his; as it proved but a coarse entertainment of Christ, when he was here. "My kingdom (saith he) is not of this world;" nor, indeed, can it be, let Jew and millenary conceit what they please. For observe that passage, in Gen. iii. 17; where, as soon as Adam is fallen, the earth is cursed; "Cursed be the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it." Did I say, 'as soon as he was fallen, the earth is cursed?' I should rather say,—as soon as Christ is promised, the earth is cursed; for there is as proper a connexion between those two, as between his fall and that curse. Christ is promised, and the earth is cursed, that Adam, and all the saints of God, might not look for blessedness upon the earth, but in Christ; nor for Christ nor his kingdom upon this cursed earth, but in heaven.

O Jew, the earth is cursed; where canst thou find a place upon it for Messias's blessed kingdom? All is but as Meshech and the tents of Kedar to him; he finds not a place here to lay his head. I may say, the title over Christ's head was, and is, a stumbling-block under the Jews' feet; where it was written, "Jesus of Nazareth," and they looked for

“Messias of Beth-lehem, ‘King’ of the Jews;” and they saw nothing in him but poverty and contempt.

In John xvii. 24: “Father, I will, that those, whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am.” “Where I am,”—where is that? Not here, wherein is poverty, contempt, and dishonour, as he experienced when he was here,—but “to see my glory:” there, where he is glorified. Alas! what treatment can he provide for them here? Can he spread a table for their full satisfaction in this wilderness, where he found none for himself? The dish he sets before them, is, “‘In this world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer,’ there is better cheer provided for you in my Father’s house. This is but a wilderness, you are passing through; Canaan is the land provided you for the flowing with milk and honey. ‘In my Father’s house there are *μοναὶ πολλαὶ*, many abiding places;’ here are you flitting from place to place, and no abiding; but I have prepared a rest for the people of God.”

An unfit place here, where there is nothing but changes and vicissitudes,—and where, in a moment, Amnon’s mirth and feasting may be turned into mourning and misery. “All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change cometh,” saith Job. Why, he met with changes enough; but he means his great change, when he should be changed no more, than that that he looks for and trusts in. An unfit place this, when the house may be blown down, whilst we are feasting in it, as it happened to Job’s children. This world, then, is no fit place for Christ to entertain his people in.

Secondly, A believer, in this world, is not yet capable of the entertainment, that Christ has to give him; therefore, that is reserved for him in his Father’s house. As Christ tells his disciples, “I have many things to speak to you, but you cannot bear them,”—so I say, in our present case, Christ hath many excellent treatments to entertain them withal; but here they are not fit for them; while we are in this corruptible flesh, we want the wedding-garment. “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God:” so, corruptible bodies are not garments fit for these divine entertainments.

1. The soul, in these bodies, does not act to the utmost extent its nature is capable of. It is like a bird, that, let out, enjoys a whole world of liberty, but not before. There

is a kind of immensity in the soul, and this is one part of God's image. Any one soul among us could hold as much wisdom, goodness, &c. as God, in its degree and capacity; but it is straitened in these bodies, that it cannot act to such an extensiveness. As the river is straitened within its banks, till it fall into the ocean; so the soul here is straitened by ignorance, infirmities, pressures; but, at death, it slips into the ocean of eternity, where there is no more straitness.

2. How impossible is it, in these mortal bodies, to see God, as he is! How hard, through the fogs of flesh, to see the things of God! How impossible to behold God in his essence! 'In the mount will the Lord be seen,' and not in the low valleys of mortality and corruption. Oh! I cannot but with rapture consider of the strange and blessed change, that blessed souls find, as soon as ever departed. Here we are groping after him, and much ado we have to discern a little of him; here one cloud or other is interposing betwixt our contemplation, and that sun. But as soon as we are got out of the body, we behold that incomprehensible light, as he is. Oh! what rapture of soul will it be, to see all clouds dispelled, and to look with open full eye upon the sun! Oh! this is our God,—we have groped, we have waited, for him. What the apostle saith^c, "But we all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory:" this is of transcendent comfort for believers, it being their happiness here "to behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and to be changed into the same image." What ravishment of joy will it be to find it effected to the utmost in eternity!

3. How impossible is it to keep the heart fixed on God here! while flesh hangs on it, that will be making it to flag aside.

^c 2 Cor. iii. 18.

A SERMON^a,

PREACHED AT

HERTFORD ASSIZE,

APRIL 6, 1666.

1 JOHN, v. 16.

There is a sin unto death: I do not say, that he shall pray for it.

AND it is a deadly sin, indeed, that outvies and excludes the charity of this apostle; a man, as his writings evidence of him, and as ecclesiastical history testifies concerning him, composed altogether of charity. His Epistles evidence to you, how urgent he is for love one to another; and ecclesiastical history will tell you, that his common salutation to all he met, was, "Let us love one another:" but here he hath met with a wretch, to whom he cannot find in his heart to say, 'God speed.' A deadly sin and a deadly sinner, to whom he cannot allow the Christian, the common, the needful charity of his own or other men's prayers:—O no; it is 'a sin unto death.'

The uttering of the first clause, "There is a sin unto death," may, not undeservedly nor impertinently, move such another inquiry in the congregation, as the uttering of those words of our Saviour, "One of you shall betray me," did move at his table; every one then to say, "Is it I?"—and every one here to say, "Is the sin mine?" As it was time for every one of Israel to look about him, lest the thing should fall to his share, when Joshua proclaimed among them, "There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel^b;" so, when the Holy Ghost proclaimeth in the words of the text, "There is a sin unto death," is it not time, is it not pertinent, for every one, that is within hearing, to look about, and take heed, lest this dead concubine do lie at the threshold of his door, as she did in Gibeah^c. And what hath any notorious sinner to say for himself, why the law of the text should not proceed against him, and condemn his

^a English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1093.

^b Josh. vii. 13.

^c Judg. xix.

profaneness, uncleanness, wickedness, unconscionableness, under the name and title of ‘a sin unto death?’ seeing it seemeth a great deal more current that there is ‘sin unto death,’ than that there should be any sin that is ‘not unto death,’ as our apostle saith there is, in the words immediately going before these that I have chosen.

In these words that I have chosen, you see there are two clauses ; and, out of either of them, arise two questions:—

Out of the former, I. What sin it is the apostle means? And, II. Why he titles it by such a name,—‘a sin unto death?’

Out of the latter, I. Why he forbiddeth to pray for it? And, II. Why he forbiddeth not to pray for it? I mean, why he speaketh not out in downright terms, ‘I say, that he should not pray for it,’ but says only, “I say not that he should.”

The Rhemists’ Popish expositors upon the place, will answer you even all these questions with a breath, if you will but take their words ; and little more than their bare word must you expect, for the proof and confirmation of what they tell you.

1. They will tell you, that the sin our apostle means, is ‘any sin whatsoever, that any one lives in, unrepentant, all his time.’

2. They will tell you, that it is titled ‘a sin unto death,’ because he lives in it till his death, and so dies in it.

3. They will tell you, that the apostle, by not praying for him, means, ‘not praying for him when he is dead ;’ but he that sins not a sin unto death, that is, that lives not in his sin till he die, but repents of it before, for him you must pray after his death.

For that the place is most properly or only meant, ‘of praying for the departed,’ say they ; this convinceth, that neither the church, nor any man, is debarred here from praying for any sinner while living, nor for remission of any sin in this life.—And so they go on.

When I read these men’s annotations on this Scripture, they often mind me of Ben-hadad’s servants, with ropes about their necks, catching at any word that fell from the king of Israel’s mouth, that might be for any advantage to their forlorn and lost cause and condition. These men’s Popish cause hath had the rope about its neck now a long

time, and been in a lost and forlorn case ; and I cannot tell, whether I should laugh or frown, to see what pitiful shift and shameful scrambling they make for it, by catching at any word or syllable in the Scripture or fathers, and wresting, and twisting, and twining it, to any seeming or colourable advantage, to their condemned cause, to save it from execution.

Certainly, they are at a very hard pinch for proof of praying for the dead, when they make such a scraping in this portion of Scripture to rake it out thence ; whereas the words are as far from meaning the living praying for the dead, as the dead praying for the living.

And at the very same game they be, in their notes upon our Saviour's words concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost, " that it shall never be forgiven in this world, nor in the world to come^c." Their note is, that ' some sins may be remitted in the next life, and, consequently, this proves purgatory.'—As the poor frantic distracted wretch at Athens, that fed and pleased himself with this fancy, that every ship that came into the port, was his ship,—that all the goods that came into the town, were his goods,—whilst he himself, in the mean time, was miserably poor, naked, and ready to famish ;—so these men think, every verse in Scripture brings in something to their stock,—every saying of the fathers, something to their bank ; whilst, in the mean while, their pitiful cause walks starving, and poor, and blind, and naked, and stands in need of all things.

The sin against the Holy Ghost, indeed, is distinct, and something different, from this ' sin unto death,' that our apostle speaketh of ; yet, since there is such a particular sin against the Holy Ghost, that is so deadly,—why should not these men think, that the sin in the text, that carries so deadly a name, is a particular sin likewise ?

It is true, indeed, that a sin, in which a man continues unrepenting until his death, and in which he dies, may very justly be called ' a sin to death,' that is, ' a sin until his death,' and it will prove a sin to death eternal ; but that the apostle means here a particular sin, and that he estimates it, not by its length, but by its weight ; not by how long the party continues in it, but by how grievous the sin is in itself,—will appear as we go along, partly by discovery of the rea-

^c Matt. xii. 32.

son of the title he puts upon it,—and partly, by discovery of the very sin itself, that is here intended.

But, before we begin with the discovery of the reason of the title, let us a little look first into the meaning of those words of our Saviour^d; “He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.” Do not the apostles here receive a new power, or privilege, or gift, which Christ had not imparted to them before? Else, why such an action as he had never used towards them before, so ‘breathing’ on them?

The common acceptation of these words, “whose soever sins ye remit or retain, are remitted or retained,” is to make them to mean the same thing, with “what ye bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven,” &c. But, besides that the expressions are of a vast difference,—why, if Christ had given them the very same power in those words, that he doth in these, why should he repeat it? Especially, why should he use such a solemn and unusual rite towards them, to *breathe* upon them?

He had given them power of miracles, and healing, and casting out devils, before, without breathing upon them. He had given them power of ‘binding and loosing,’ that is, of establishing or abolishing the rites and laws of Moses,—for so the phrase, in the common acceptation of the nation, did only signify; and this he did without breathing upon them. Therefore, certainly in this his new action, and these his new words, as I may call them, he gives them some new power; and that in two kinds:—

1. In his breathing upon them, and bidding them receive the Holy Ghost, he gives the Holy Ghost, to give again; or, he gives them power, by the imposition of their hands, to bestow the Holy Ghost, as the sacred story tells you the apostle did, and none but the apostles could do.

And, 2. In his words, “whose soever sins ye remit or retain,” he gives them a punitive or executive double power,—viz. to strike desperate or incorrigible and horrid transgressors, with some corporal punishment or stroke,—or else to ‘give them up to Satan,’ to be tortured and scourged in body, and vexed and disquieted in mind. Where had Peter

^d John, xx. 22.

his warrant to strike Ananias and Sapphira with death, but from these words? And Paul to strike Elymas with blindness, and to deliver Hymenæus and Alexander unto Satan, but from that apostolic power, which Christ granted to the apostles in these words?

Well: might not these sins very well be called ‘sins unto death,’ that were overtaken with such deadly and dreadful penalties?

Was not that sin a ‘sin unto death,’ that was to be retained, as retaining is set in direct opposition to remitting? Thus may we bring the ‘subjectum quæstionis’ into a far narrower compass than the Rhemists bring it, who do bewray their ignorance one way, that they may serve their own turn another: their ignorance of the proper original of the phrase ‘sin unto death,’ that they may serve their turn about praying for the dead.

The greatest difficulties of the Scripture lie in the language: for unlock the language and phrases, and the difficulty is gone. And, therefore, they, that take upon them to preach by the Spirit, and to expound the Scripture by the Spirit, let them either unlock to me the Hebrew phrases in the Old Testament, and the Greek in the New, that are difficult and obscure,—or else they do nothing. Now, to attain to the meaning of such dark and doubtful phrases, the way is not so proper to put on them a sense of our own, as to consider what sense they might take them in, to whom, and among whom, the things were spoken and written in their common speech.

If it were well considered, how the Jewish nation understood binding and loosing in their schools, and in their common speech,—we should never need to mint such senses of our own to put upon the phrase; it would so be done to our hands.

Such an obscure phrase is that of our Saviour’s, about the sin against the Holy Ghost, “that it shall never be forgiven, neither in this life, nor,” &c. And the collection that the Rhemists make upon it, may seem very logical; “For in that he saith, That sin shall not be forgiven in the world to come, doth it not argue, that some other sins are then forgiven?”—But this is their own sense and logic; it is not our Saviour’s.

Now, how should we know our Saviour’s sense? By con-

sidering how *they* would understand it, to whom the words were spoken, in their common acceptation and language,—viz. they would soon understand it to be a direct facing and confuting of their foolish opinion concerning forgiveness of blasphemy against God; which was, that repentance, and the day of expiation, expiated a third part of the sin; corporal punishment, inflicted by the magistrate, expiated another third part; but death did quite wipe it clean out: “For (say they) it is written, ‘This sin shall not be purged from you till you die,’—which argues, that it was purged by death.”—“No (saith our Saviour); neither in this life either by repentance, nor day of expiation, nor corporal punishment, nor pardon in the life to come, by the purging and wiping out of death.”

Such an obscure phrase is this before us, “a sin unto death;” and it seems a fair sense which the Rhemists have put upon it of their own,—viz. that it should mean, ‘a sin a man lives in, till he die.’ But this is their own sense, it is not the apostle’s. Now, how should we know the apostle’s sense? By considering how they understood this phrase in their common language, to whom he wrote. And how was that? Take it up by this observation;—

That in the Jewish schools, and nation, and language, this was a most frequent and ordinary saying, אִם שׁוּגַג הִטָּאָה “If a man do such or such a thing as should not be done, ignorantly,—he is to bring a sin-offering, and that atones for him. But אִם מְזִיד כָּרַת if he do it wilfully, he is bound over to cutting off.”

And in this they speak but the words of the law^e; “If any soul sin through ignorance, he shall bring a she-goat of the first year for a sin-offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for him, that sinneth ignorantly. But the soul that doth aught presumptuously; whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same hath reproached the Lord,—that soul shall be cut off from among his people.”

Now, what is meant by ‘cutting off?’ If you ask some, they will put a sense of their own upon the phrase, and tell you it means ‘a cutting off or separating a person from the congregation and public assemblies, by excommunication.’ But ask the Jews, to and among whom the thing was spoken, what it means in their common speech and accepta-

^e Num. xv. 27, 28.

tion,—and they will tell you, ‘cutting off’ means מוֹתָה בַּיָּד “Death by the hands of Heaven;” death or destruction by the hand of God:—interpreting the matter to this purpose,—that, if a person sinned wilfully and presumptuously, there was no sin-offering allowed in that case; but the party, so offending, fell immediately under liableness to divine vengeance, to be destroyed or ‘cut off’ by the hand of Heaven.

And this interpretation of the phrase of ‘cutting off,’ the apostle Paul doth justify in that passage^a, “If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment,” &c. That text of Moses lots out the family of the Achan, that we are speaking of, the ‘sin unto death:’ and this text of the apostle takes him by the poll, and tells what sin it is.

It tells you what sin it is,—viz. ‘sinning wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth.’ It limits to you, why it is called ‘a sin unto death;’ because there is no other way upon the committing of it, but “a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation.” And it gives you some intimation why no praying for it, because no sacrifice for it.

Before we come to speak upon the words, we have some cause to muse and mourn over them. As it is said, Origen wept over that passage of the Psalmist, that, after his apostasy, stung him, in Psal. l. 16, 17; “But unto the wicked God said, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.”

If there be no sacrifice for sin, but a fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation,—when we have sinned wilfully, after we have once received the knowledge of the truth,—“men and brethren, what shall we do?” Take the ‘truth’ in the sense that may help most to favour us, for the ‘gospel;’ as it means there, indeed;—and take ‘sinning wilfully’ for as exclusive a term as you can, to shut and exclude us out of the guilt here intended; yet who can say but he hath sinned wilfully, since he received the knowledge of the gospel, over and over?

^a Heb. x. 26.

If I should take Jeremiah's course, in his fifth chapter, ver. 4, and forward, sending first to the poor or inferior rank, and ask them, 'Have you not sinned wilfully, since you received the knowledge of the gospel in your private deportment?' or go to the great ones, or to them in power, dignity, and estate, and ask them, 'Have you not sinned wilfully, since you received the knowledge of the truth in your public employment?' I cannot say, what every one, or any one, may answer: but I am sure the fairest way, and upon the justest reason, for every one to answer, were, as it is, Job vii. 20; "I have sinned; what shall I do to thee, O preserver of men?" I have sinned wilfully; what shall I do to thee, O thou giver of the gospel?

The word the apostle useth here, is *ἐκουσίως*, which, in the best and nearest propriety, signifies 'willingly:' and so it shreds a lapful of gourds the more into the pot of pottage, to make it the more bitter. For though some conscience may contend to secure itself against the accusation of sinning 'wilfully,' yet who can say but he hath sinned 'willingly,' since he received the knowledge of the gospel, and that many a time over?

The allay, shall I say, or the smartness, of this word, is best to be judged by the contrary word, which the Greek interpreters used in the case of Moses, we have alleged. What he speaks of sinning 'ignorantly,' they render *ἀκουσίως*, sinning 'unwillingly;' and so they oppose unwilling sinning and presumptuous sinning, one against the other. And, answerably, the apostle using the word, *ἐκουσίως*, that doth most directly oppose *ἀκουσίως*, 'unwilling,' he sheweth plainly that he takes it in the same direct opposition,—namely, to signify 'sinning wilfully or presumptuously.'

But what is this particular sin that he doth intend? What is that 'sinning wilfully' with him, that, with our apostle, is 'a sin unto death?' Guess it by the story of those times, which shows it plain enough, that I may not spend more time than is needful about the discovery of it. Our Saviour, in the end of his parable of the unclean spirit cast out of a man, and walking in dry places,—and, because he could find no rest there, returning to the place whence he came out, with seven other spirits worse than himself, and dwelling there,—hath this sad cadence, "Even so shall it be also to this wicked

generation^c." Ah! unhappy generation, the devil cast out and returning again! absent a while himself, but returning with seven other devils worse than himself; how great, how sad, an apostasy doth this intimate in the Jewish nation, from the gospel, which had cast out the unclean spirit, for a while, from among them!

Such an apostasy, very deadly and general, from the gospel, after they had received the knowledge of it, and so evidently recorded in the apostle's Epistles, that I need not to recite it; and so copiously, that I should but tire you with citing places. Take but these two or three:—

Gal. i. 6: The apostle intimates that "they were removed," and soon removed, "from him that called them into the grace of Christ."—2 Tim. i. 15; All Asia, which once had been all for Paul, were now departed from him.—2 Pet. ii. 22; "It was happened to some according to the proverb, 'The dog is returned to his vomit.'"

Such instances are numerous. But this was not all: the cast-out devil did not only return, but seven worse devils returned with him. They did not only apostatize from the gospel they had professed,—but became bitter enemies and persecutors of the gospel, from which they apostatized. This cursed root of gall and wormwood did sprout forth into hell, as cursed branches, fruits of Sodom; direct revolting to their old Judaism, or downright falling into Nicolaitism: the one, gainsaying liberty of the gospel,—the other, turning it into libertinism: the one, an enemy to the gospel, because of its spiritualness,—the other, because of its holiness.

The Jewish nation were so doting upon their ceremonies, and formal manner of religion and worship, that, as you find all along the story of those times, in the Acts of the Apostles, and their Epistles,—the unbelieving Jews cried down the gospel, and were bitter enemies to it, because it cried down their ceremonies. And many and many of those, that had believed, apostatized from it, upon the same dotage, and became as bitter, nay, if possible, more bitter, enemies against them than the other.

The Nicolaitans stumbled at another block, misinterpreting the liberty of the gospel; and they fell into all looseness and uncleanness, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to com-

^c Matt. xii. 45.

mit fornication : and they became as horrid enemies to the gospel, as the other, because it taught and persuaded a better course. These things lie so clear in Scripture, to be observed, that I should do but a needless work to insist on them.

Thus, whereas that was a happy wonder of Paul^d, “That he now preached the gospel, which he once destroyed;” the contrary is an unhappy monster with these men : they now destroy the gospel, which they once professed ; and, it is not unlikely, what some of them preached. Instances of this are little less copious than the other. I shall offer you but two : the one foretelling, that such a thing should be ; and the other telling, that such a thing was come to pass.

Acts xx. 29, 30 : “This I know, that, after my departure, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, spoiling the flock. Also, of your own selves, shall men arise, speaking perverse things,” &c. To which this echoes, 1 John ii. 18 ; “Little children, it is the last time. And as ye have heard, that antichrist should come, even so now are there many antichrists ; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us,” &c.—‘They went out from us ;’ there is their apostasy from the gospel : ‘They are antichrists ;’ there is their enmity against it.

And, by the way, learn from the apostle there, how to construe ‘the last times ;’ which phrase occurs so frequently,—for the ‘last times of the Jewish state and city.’

And I must crave leave to understand that passage concerning ‘the man of sin,’ in 2 Thess. ii, of these very persons, and of those very times. I read the Romish antichrist in the Revelation, in great letters ; but, truly, I can read none but the Jewish antichrist in this place.

This, then, more peculiarly, is the sin our apostle meaneth here, and the apostle Paul, in that place of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that I cited ; as might be showed, out of that, and this Epistle, if it were needful : but I suppose, that is not much needful, since the thing speaks itself ; and it is so plain, that there could not be a more deadly sin ; and there was not a more horrid sin in those times, than such horrid apostasy, and such horrid enmity.

Every presumptuous sin, in the text, was cited in Moses, was a ‘sin unto death,’ in the sense that the Jewish nation

^d Gal. i. 23.

understood ‘a sin unto death,’—viz. that brought to an immediate liableness to cutting off by divine vengeance. Now, this was a sin of presumption, and despising the word of God, as Moses explains what that presumptuous sinning is, in a high degree, which as the apostle tells in the same chapter, that it was ‘a treading under foot the Son of God,’ &c: therefore, it is no wonder, if, with Paul, there be no sacrifice for it,—and, with this apostle, no ‘praying’ for it.

But why does not this our apostle speak out, and say, “I say he should not pray for it,” but says only, “I do not say that he should?”

Let me lay to this expression, that passage of our Saviour^e, “If he neglect to hear the church, let him be to thee as a heathen or a publican.” By which our Saviour doth not excommunicate such a one out of the church; for he saith not, “let him be to the *church*, but *thee*, as a heathen.” But he dischargeth and acquitteth the party injured from those duties and offices, which he owed otherwise to him as a brother.

Our apostle’s expression is much like to the same tenor: he takes care of the consciences of the people of God, as well as he sheweth the two conditions of the sinner he speaketh of. There were some, that might be in a strait, what to do in this case. They were commanded by their Lord and Master, to pray for their enemies: these enemies of theirs, were become so like their father the devil, that it might pose their consciences, whether they should pray for them or no. Therefore, this divine apostle useth a happy temper: that he will lay no charge on them, that are so pinched,—to pray for them: nor, indeed, forbid those to pray for them, that are more enlarged: for, undoubtedly, the indifferent expression of the apostle, as I may call it, seems plainly to carry with it such a consideration.

Ye see here, in the text, a deadly wounded wretch, like Amasa^f, wallowing in his own blood: if you call in Moses and Paul, to give their coroner’s verdict, concerning the manner and cause of his death,—from those texts of theirs, that we have cited, they will tell you, that he is ‘felo de se,’ that he destroyed himself; and they will tell you, that it was by wilful sinning after the knowledge of the truth, wilful sinning against the word of God.

^e Matt. xviii. 17.

^f 2 Sam. xx. 12.

That sin is the more desperately deadly, by how much it is the more desperately wilful: Hos. v. 11, "Ephraim is oppressed, and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment." One would think it should be, 'because he did not willingly walk after the commandment:' but by 'commandment,' is meant, the idolatrous commandment of Jeroboam, the statutes of Omri; and Ephraim was broken in pieces, because he walked after them, and broke the more, because he walked after them willingly. "If the motions of sin, which are by the law, do work in them, to bring forth fruit unto death," as the apostle says^g,—much more the motions of sin, which are clean against the law. I must confess, I do not understand the irritating or provoking power of the law, which some collect from this place: for to me it is without doubt, that the meaning of the apostle is, the motions of sin that were by the law mistaken, not efficiently; for such was the judgment of the Jews concerning the law,—viz. that it did restrain only the outward action, but regarded not the internal motion: and so the apostle seems to give some hint of his own mistake a while of the law, about the point of lust. Now, if the fruit of those motions of sin, which are by the mistake of the law, be so deadly,—how must the actings of sin, which are against the known law wilfully committed, be much more deadly!

Among the grains (shall I call them?) or the talent-weights, that are cast into the scales, to make sin weigh exceeding sinful,—this adds not the least aggravation, if it do not indeed the greatest,—that it was done knowingly and wilfully. And, therefore, in that cousin-german sin to this we are speaking of (for to me they are clearly distinct), the sin against the Holy Ghost; the grievousness of it, in comparison of sinning against the Son, lies not in regard of the persons sinned against, as if the Holy Ghost were a nobler person than the Son; but in regard of the manner of sinning:—the Son they knew not in so much humility, and so blasphemed him out of ignorance; but they saw the apparent evidence of the Holy Ghost in the miracles they saw, and yet blasphemed him wilfully.

This dyes the sins of wicked men of so deep a dye above the sins of the saints of God: because those sin with whole propensity of mind,—these, of infirmity, and against their

^g Rom. vii. 5.

wills. And I cannot but remember the determination of St. Austin, in a point of this nature, about chaste Christian matrons and virgins, that were ravished by the enemy, when he broke into the city: he determines well, that they were not defiled, though they were defiled; their minds pure, though the body polluted; and he concludes, “*duo fuerunt, ast unus adulterium commisit* ;” “there were two in the action, but one of them in the adultery ;”—and that here, one sinned wilfully; the other, had no mind to the sin at all.

This, then, if there were nothing else, doth sufficiently aggravate the grievousness of wilful sinning,—that it carries the very image and superscription of the sin of the devil: it is, as it were, flesh and bone of his bone, and sin of his sin, very devil of very devil.

Does any ask me, What was that sin of the devil? It has been conceived by many, that it was such a pride, as made him aspire to be equal with God, or above him,—to set his throne even with God, or to unthrone him: and to this purpose have those words been applied^h, “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer! son of the morning,” &c. “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, &c; I will be like the Most High.” Which words, indeed, mean only the arrogance and haughtiness of the proud king of Babylon. Does any one, then, ask me, what was the sin of the devil? I should answer, desperate malicing the honour and happiness of man, in which God had placed him,—and desperate despising and scorning of that charge and command, that God had laid upon angels concerning man, that they should attend him, and keep him in all his ways. And both these desperately wilful, for he could sin at no lower rate; for he could not sin of ignorance, being an angel; and an angel could have no tempter to sin, but himself.

I shall not go about to define or circumscribe exactly the bounds, wherein to conclude ‘wilful sinning:’ I shall not confine this evil spirit with any circle: because I would have every one to look well about, lest the case be his own; and not me, but every man’s own conscience, to judge whether he be guilty of wilful sinning or no. What thinks the conscience of a false witness, of a foresworn deponent, that, knowingly and resolvedly, takes a false oath, perverts jus-

^h Isa. xiv. 12, 13.

tice, and seeks the injury of his neighbour,—doth not this man know he sins wilfully? What thinks the common swearer, the commoner profaner of the Lord's day, the unclean person, the riotous and wanton, the deceiver, oppresser, scoffer of the power of godliness,—does he not know, or think, that he sins wilfully? If they will not know it, nor think so, but be more wilful still, in wilful shutting their eyes against conviction; let me leave that saying of the Lord himself, written, as it were, upon these walls, for a witness against them, (shall I say?) or as a doom upon them, which you have Isa. xxvi. 11; “They will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people: yea, and the fire of God's enemies shall devour them.” The apostle echoes the last words in that passage we cited, “expectation of fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”

I might show the deadliness of such wilful sinning, especially, by two observations:—

I. That it is a most deadly symptom, when the ‘actus primus voluntatis,’ when the will is so desperately poisoned at the bottom. The acting of any sin is deadly enough of itself; but when it is committed by the full bent of the first act of the will, it is as poisoning the bullet, to make it the more deadly, which was killing enough of itself before.—Christian, how readest thou? “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, and with all thy heart.” But, wilful sinner, how actest thou? To oppose the counsel and command of the Lord with all the heart, and mind, and soul,—to love, and follow, and commit wickedness, with all the heart, and mind, and soul,—if this be not a deadly wound under the fifth rib, a mortal plague at the bottom of the will,—what can you call the plague of the heart?

II. Such sinning doth not only proceed from such a deadly principle, but it adds more deadliness to that principle. Every wilful sinning doth add more hardness and more wilfulness of sinning to the heart still. A hard heart doth harden by sinning: and, the more the sin is wilful, the more the heart gathers hardness.

The Jews feign this creeping on of the tempter to Eve,—that the serpent asked the woman, ‘Why not eat of this tree?’ she answered, ‘Because God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.’ First, he

drew nigh to it, and said, 'Thou seest I am nigh it, and yet do not die:' then she touched it, and then ate of it. So do wilful sinnings draw on one another, and from one the heart is emboldened to another. If such sinners would but find time, with an impartial candle of self-examination, to look into their own hearts, they would find the too sad experience of this truth written there, in black letters, indeed.

But because few such will read their own hearts, let me leave that verse of the apostle with them, to read and to see what construction they can make of it, to save their own stake: "If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

A SERMON^a,

PREACHED AT

HERTFORD ASSIZE,

MARCH 27, 1669.

ACTS, xvii. 31.

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

OCCASIONAL meditations are Samson's honey gathered out of a dead carcass: heavenly thoughts taken up from earthly occurrences: the sun and heaven seen, in looking downward into the water: from the earthly objects that man meets with here below, the heart raising meditation upon them to some heavenly purpose:—the true philosopher's stone, indeed, that turns what a man meets withal, into some golden meditation. And this divine elixir our Saviour used very much. From the occasion of the Samaritan woman's fetching water, he raiseth his discourse and her thoughts, to consider of the water of his grace^b; and, upon the occasion of the people's following him for loaves, he would raise their minds to think of the meat that perished not, but endureth to eternal life^c. And in all his parables, which were so exceeding frequent with him, wherein he was still teaching some spiritual and heavenly things, by some earthly resemblance, whatsoever the particular intent of every several parable was, yet this intimation went in general with them all,—That there was to be an improvement of the observation of earthly things and occurrences, to heavenly thoughts and meditations: as he, in the story, that looked towards the earth, and pointed towards the earth, and yet cried, 'O cœlum!'

Methinks, such a noble and remarkable occasion, as we now meet withal, should not be let pass without some elevated meditation. And, when we see our assizes, judges,

^a English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1100.

^b John, iv.

^c John, vi.

trials, sentencings, methinks a 'sursum corda' may do very well in thoughts taken of the great and dreadful judgment. As, Isa. xxxiii. 17, 18, "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty; thy heart shall meditate terrors."

A right occasional meditation. The sight of an earthly king, in his royalty, may justly move and stir up the heart to meditate the terrors of the King of glory. The sight of a judge, in his authority and honour, and the sight of the day and of the passages of an assize, may, very properly, and should, indeed, stir up the heart to meditate the terrors of that great day, "which the Lord hath appointed, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, by the man which he hath ordained; of which," &c.

Such a reflection caused me to choose these words to discourse upon at this time: at the assize of our county to stir up the remembrance of the greatest assize of all the world, a meditation that can never be but useful, and more especially at such a time as this, that gives some specimen and idea, in little, of the thing, and does, as it were in landscape, lay the thing before us.

The apostle, in this place, is discoursing to the university-men of Athens. It is said, ver. 21, "That the Athenians spent their time in nothing, but to tell or hear some new thing." And here was strange business for them to purpose. Strange news to them, to hear such a sermon against their idolatry,—to hear speak concerning the resurrection of the dead, and a universal judgment of all the world, and all the world to be judged by a man, that God had ordained. Such riddles to flesh and blood, and to the wisdom of this world, are the great matters and mysteries of the gospel and of salvation.

The judgment to come, that he speaks of in this verse, he characters or pictures in divers colours or circumstances.

I. The object of it: 'He shall judge the world.'

II. The manner: "He shall judge it in righteousness."

III. The time: 'At a day, which he hath appointed.'

IV. The agent to be employed in it: 'The man, whom he hath ordained.'

V. and lastly, The certainty of it: 'He hath given assurance thereof,' &c.

There is some controversy about the translating of that clause, 'He hath given assurance.' In the Greek it is,

Πίστιν παρασχὼν πᾶσιν, which will admit a double construction. The Vulgar Latin and the Syriac give one,—our English and the French, another.

The Vulgar Latin renders it, “Fidem præbens omnibus:” which, I should have supposed, might freely have been rendered in the sense our English gives, “Giving assurance to all;” but that I find some expositions constrain him another way,—viz. “Affording faith to all.” And the Syrian inclines the same way, for it renders, ‘Restoring every man to his faith,’ or ‘to faith in him:’ as if the meaning were, that ‘God, by the resurrection of Christ, did restore the world to faith and believing, from that ignorance and infidelity, which it lay under before;’—which is a real and a very noble truth; but I question, whether that be the apostle’s meaning in this place.

For he is showing, that ‘God had appointed a universal judgment, and hath ordained Christ to be judge:’—and for proof and confirmation of both, especially of the latter, he saith, as our English well renders, he ‘hath given assurance,’ and as the French, “he hath given certainty,” in that he hath raised; and the Greek very clearly bears such a sense. And this to be the sense that is intended, is yet farther clear, by observing the argumentation of the apostle in this place. Read the verse before; “The times of their ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth every man to repent: because he hath appointed a day,” &c. Why, was not this day appointed before that time, that Christ was risen? The Jews will tell you, that ‘heaven and hell were created before the world:’ then, certainly, the judgment, that was to doom to heaven or hell, was appointed before. But our Saviour, in the sentence that he shall pronounce at that judgment^c, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you,” &c, shows, that the appointing of the day of judgment was of old time, long and long ago before Christ’s resurrection; but the apostle tells, That he had never given such assurance of it before, as he did then, by raising him that should be judge.

The apostle, at this portion of Scripture, doth plainly show three things. First, He lays down a doctrine. Secondly, He proves it. And, thirdly, He makes application. His doctrine is, that ‘God hath appointed a day, wherein

^c Matt. xxv. 34.

he will judge the world in righteousness.'—His proof, from God's own real vouchment, 'He hath given assurance, in that he raised Christ from the dead.' His application, Therefore, 'let all men, in every place, repent.'

I should deserve a just censure, if I should refuse the apostle's method, to take another,—and not tread in the steps of that logical proceeding, that he had printed before. Yet I shall decline to insist much upon the confirmation of the doctrine, as a particular head by itself,—since the taking up the second thing, the proof of it, is the doing the same thing. Only I shall call out, as the prophet Isaiah doth in the place cited; who, as soon as he had said, "Thy heart shall meditate terrors," presently subjoins, "where is the scribe," &c. So, while our heart is meditating of terrors, of the thing we are speaking, this day, 'which God hath appointed wherein he will judge the world,' &c: where is the Sadducee, where the atheist, where the disputer of this world? what say they to this thing?

I. The Sadducee will tell you, that "there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit^d;" and would persuade us, that Moses was of the same opinion, because he speaks not of any such things, 'in terminis,' in all his book.

It is a common received opinion among the learned, that the Sadducees refused all the books of the Old Testament, but only the five books of Moses: if they mean it absolutely,—I must confess, my small reading hath not taught so far as to be satisfied in that: but if they mean it with some qualification, then I believe the thing is very true; in such a qualified sense, as to say, the rest of the Jews refused the third part of the Bible, which they call כתובים: Christians render the word 'Hagiographa:' that is, they refused to have it read in the synagogue. The law and prophets they read there every sabbath^e; but admitted not the reading of Job, Psalms, Solomon's books, Daniel, Lamentations, Chronicles, Ezra, &c; not so much out of the undervaluation of those books, but because they accounted the other were sufficient. So, if you say, 'The Sadducees admitted no other books of the Old Testament to be read in their synagogues, on the sabbath, but only the books of Moses,'—I doubt not, but you speak very true: but that they utterly rejected and made nothing of the rest of that sacred volume,

^d Acts, xxiii. 8.

^e Acts, xiii. 15.

I am yet to seek for satisfaction. And, I suppose, something may be said out of the ancient records of the Jews, that might countenance the contrary: but it is not now time and place to enter into such a discourse.

But you will say, 'If they had them in their closets, though not in their synagogues,—if they read them, though not there,—if they believe them,—how could they be ignorant of the resurrection, judgment to come, and world to come,—of which there is so plain declaration in the rest of the Old Testament, though not in Moses?

The answer is easy: Because they had this principle,—that 'nothing is to be believed, as a fundamental article of faith, but what may be grounded in Moses.'

The very Pharisees themselves did not far differ from them in this principle: and I could produce a Pharisee, in their own writings, saying, that "if a man believed the resurrection, &c; yet believed not that it was taught and grounded in the law of Moses, he should not be orthodox." Now, why Moses did so obscurely intimate these great fundamentals, in comparison of other parts of the Bible, I shall not trouble you with discussing, though very acceptable reasons may be given of it. We find the resurrection asserted by our Saviour out of Moses, by one argument; and we find it asserted by many arguments, by the Pharisees against the Sadducees, in the Jews' own pandect; and so we leave the Sadducees to take his answer and confutation there. But,

II. Behold, a worse than a Sadducee is here; and that is, a Christian atheist. Oh! give me that word 'Christian' again, that I speak not contradictions. And yet there are too many in our times,—O! that I might not say in our nation,—that were baptized into the Christian faith, that live in a Christian church, and would go under a Christian name,—and yet that deny these great points of Christian religion, and greater too, if there may be greater.

There are too many of atheistical principles now-a-days, that, say what you can for the assuring that there is an eternal judgment, yet you never assure them. "Non persuadebis, etiamsi persuaseris," "You cannot persuade them, though you do persuade." They will make but a puff at such a doctrine, and tell you, that 'religion and such doctrines preached, are but as bugbears of policy, to keep men

in awe and order.'—I need not to enlarge their sayings to this purpose, they are but too large and broad in themselves: I have only this to say to them at this time.

Let me mind you of that passage, Zech. xi. 8, where the prophet, speaking in the person of Christ, hath these words, "Three shepherds also I cut off in one month: and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me." The 'three shepherds' that he means, were the Pharisee, Sadducee, and Essene,—the ring-leaders and the wrongleaders of the Jewish nation: shepherds, that caused the unfortunate sheep to go astray, and there fed them not, but did destroy them. Now, how can it be said, that Christ cut them off, and especially now, in one month?—when it is most apparent, that these three sects and heresies continued many years, many scores of years, after our Saviour was ascended into heaven. Nay, Pharisaism is alive among all the Jewish nation unto this day.

The meaning is this,—that Christ delivered a truth and doctrine, enough and enough again to confound and destroy those cursed heresies, and to direct into the way of truth: but if those heretics will not be convinced, and embrace that doctrine and truth,—that doctrine and truth, in time, will confound, condemn, and destroy them. "The word that I speak (saith Christ), shall judge you at the last day."

God gives his word; and whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, it is, and will be, the word of God for ever. And if men will not believe it, God will not be beholden to them to believe it: let them believe it at their own peril. A Papist will not believe the divine authority of the Scriptures for themselves; God and the Scripture will never be beholden to him to believe it: they need not to beg his believing of it; but let him look to it, if he do not believe it.

If God have given such demonstrations of the judgment to come, as may assure all the world of the certainty of it,—and an atheist, an epicure, a fool, will not believe it; if he will not believe, what a Felix believed and trembled at,—if he will not believe, what devils believe and tremble at,—God will never come crouching to him, to beg of him, that he will believe it; but let him disbelieve it at his own peril, and take what comes.

When God gave the Scriptures, he never intended they

should stand at the courtesy of every curious carping atheist, whether they should be of authority, and be believed or no: but God gives them in their divine authority and majesty: and laid them a sure foundation in Sion, elect, precious, and glorious; that he, that will build upon them, may build and prosper. But if any cross, or quarrelsome, or wilfully blind, Bayard, will stumble at them, where he might walk plain,—let him take his own hazard, and stumble, and fall, and be broken, and snared, and taken: while, in the mean while, the foundation of God remaineth sure, and the divine Scriptures will be the divine Scriptures, and retain their truth and Author, when such a wretch is dashed all to pieces.

III. Then cometh the ‘disputer of this world,’ such as these scholars of Athens, that Paul was now discoursing with,—that will have nothing believed, but what may be grasped by human reason; and he will tell, that it is very unlikely, there should be a universal judgment; because it is very unlikely, there should be a resurrection. That bodies in the grave, that have been dust these thousand thousand years, should live and rise again the same—O! how many arguments he frames to show you, that it is against all logic, philosophy, nature, reason.

I shall first reply to him, as Paul to Agrippa, “King Agrippa, believest thou the Scriptures? I know that thou believest.” Oh! thou disputer, believest thou there is a God? I hope thou believest. If not, I shall give thee the answer, much like that I gave the atheist before,—‘God will be God, whether thou wilt or no:’ as Scripture will be Scripture, whether thou believest it or no. But if thou believest that God is, and that he is what he is,—then, why dost thou go about to measure the great things of God, by the pitiful, scant measure of poor human reason?

I remember the check in the story of him, that went about such a thing. He was deeply studying upon the mystery of the Trinity, and went about to fathom it by reason, and to suit it to reason. As he was thus studying at the sea-side, he saw a child that was about to empty the ocean into a ditch, with a spoon; and when he told him, how simple and vain a thing he went about; ‘Even so dost thou,’ saith the child,—or an angel, in likeness of a child,—‘when thou goest about to draw out the profound and bottomless mystery of the sacred Trinity, by thy silly reason.’

What! must we then believe things, that are clear contrary to reason? I answer, There are no points, in all the mysteries of divinity, contrary to reason, if we resolve them into the right principle; that is, if we resolve them into the power, will, and working of God. That this vast universe should be created of nothing, in a moment; that God should become man; that dead bodies should be raised again; that this mortal should put on immortality;—are high mysteries, many regions above natural reason,—but not a whit contrary to reason, if you resolve them, as I said before, into the power, will, and working of God.

Let philosophy and human reason, therefore, cavil, as much as they can, against the resurrection, as a thing unlikely, incredible, impossible; I shall only answer in the tune of them, that, when they saw a thing as unlikely and incredible, yet brought to pass by divine power,—viz. Elias's pouring water on and about the altar, and bringing fire,—they fell on their faces, and cried, “The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God.”

And if the Lord he be God, the Lord he be God,—he can raise all the dead in a moment, and bring them to judgment, as he created the world in a moment, by the word of his power, if it be but his will so to do. And, that it is his will so to do, “he hath given assurance, in that he hath appointed a day, wherein to judge the world in righteousness, by the man that he hath ordained.” And of that appointment and ordaining, “he hath given assurance, in that he raised him from the dead.”

And so we are come to the second part of our task, or the second thing that I named to be spoken,—viz. the ‘assurance’ that God hath given of the judgment to come; and more particularly, of that, whereby he hath assured, that Christ shall be judge,—viz. “in that he raised him from the dead.” The assurance God hath given of the judgment to come, we may distinguish into verbal and real; assurance that he hath given in his word, and in his providential dispensation.

I need not to insist upon his verbal assurances, of the certainness that he hath given of such a thing in word; for he that runs, may read them. Such as these, Eccles. xi. 9,—and xii. 14,—2 Cor. v. 10; and multitudes of passages to the same purpose. So that the apostle reckons ‘eternal judgment’ for one of the fundamental articles of our Christian

faith; and that it is so clearly asserted, that he finds he needs not to insist much upon the proving of it, Heb. vi. 2.

And as the verbal assurances, that God hath given of this in Scripture, are so very many,—so the real ones, that he hath given in his dispensations, are not few. I shall but mention some, and pitch only upon this mentioned in the text, Christ's resurrection.

I. Was not the judgment of all the world, by water, in the days of Noah, a prognostication and assurance of the judgment to come, at the end of the world? Certainly, they must need conclude so, that think that Peter speaks of the last judgment, in 2 Epist. iii. 6, 7; where he hath these words; "The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heaven and earth that now are, are kept in store, reserved unto fire."

II. Was not the judgment and sad conflagration of Jerusalem, and destruction of the Jewish church and nation, an assurance of the judgment to come; when the expressions, whereby it is described, are such, as, you think, meant nothing else but that final judgment? As, "Christ's coming:—coming in clouds, in his glory, in his kingdom:—the day of the Lord; the great and terrible day of the Lord:—the end of the world; the end of all things:—the sun darkened; the moon not giving light:—the stars falling from heaven, and the powers of heaven shaken:—the sign of the Son of man appearing in heaven,—heaven departing, as a scroll rolled together, and every mountain and hill removed out of its place," &c. You would think, they meant nothing but the last and universal judgment; whereas, their meaning, indeed, is Christ's coming in judgment and vengeance against the Jewish city and nation; but a fore-signification, also, of the last judgment.

III. I might speak of particular fearful judgments upon persons and places. Are not they assurances of the judgment to come? I am sure, the apostle Peter raiseth them to such a signification, in his Second Epistle and second chapter, where, when he had mentioned the judgment of the angels that fell,—of the judgment of the old world by water, and of Sodom by fire,—he makes this conclusion, ver. 9; "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the ungodly to the day of judgment, to be punished."

IV. Are not the tribunals and judicatures, that God hath set up on earth, assurances, that he hath given of a final judgment to come? Upon which, we may take up the style of the Psalmist, in Psal. xciv. 9: "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear?" So, he that hath erected judicatures, shall not he judge?

V. Is not the judicature, that he hath set up in every man's soul, an undoubted assurance of the judgment coming? Where the conscience, as one very well defines it, is 'Præ-judicium judicii,' 'A foretaste, a preface, to the judgment to come.'

VI. and lastly, The very prospering of the wicked in this world, and the affliction of the righteous, is an undoubted assurance, that the day is coming, when both the one and other are to be judged according to their works, and receive a reward according to their works. And, with this very argument, William Tyrius, in his 'Bello Sacro,' relates that he satisfied Amalrich, king of Jerusalem, when he desired him to give him some proof of this very point. So that that very prosperity, in this world, that deceives atheistical men to think, there shall be no judgment,—is continually a growing argument that there shall.

Upon all these things I might have spoken very largely, but I hasten to that assurance that is in the text,—viz. 'The resurrection of Christ' may give assurance to all the world, of his coming to judgment. It is worth your observing these two things, about the Jews' asking a sign from our Saviour:

1. That he ever denies to give them a sign^f. He wrought signs and wonders among them above number, but he would never work that, that should be a mere sign. His healing diseases, &c. were not mere signs; but were benefits, by miracle, wrought for the people: as the plagues on Egypt were not mere signs, but punishments wrought by miracle.

2. That he still, when they asked a sign, referred them to his resurrection. When, John ii, he whips the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and they ask him, "What sign showest thou, seeing thou doest these things?" he refers them thither, ver. 19; "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up:" speaking of the temple of his body.—So, Matt. xii. 38, when the scribes and Pharisees are at it, "Master, we would see a sign from thee,"—he still refers to his

^f Matt. xii. 39.

resurrection; “No sign shall be given, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:”—‘As Jonah was three days and three nights buried in the whale’s belly, but rose again, and was cast alive on shore,—so shall the Son of man be buried, and rise again.’ And why thus refer them still to his resurrection? Because that was the great sign and demonstration, that he was the Messiah, the Son of God; “Declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead^g.” And,

Observe that allegation of the apostle^h, “God hath raised up Jesus; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” Was this resurrection-day, the day of the Lord’s begetting him? was that the first day, that he was the Son of God? It was the day that he was first declared in full power, and that it was manifest that he was the Son of God. It was the day of his victory and putting on his kingdom, the day of his trophy and triumph, and the sign that he was the Son of God, the true Messiah. And the Jews, that would not believe that, no sign would serve to make them believe. That, indeed, you will say, gave assurance to all men, that he was the Son of God, the true Messiah; but how did that give assurance, that there should be a universal judgment, and he the Judge? Truly, he that knows what the true Messiah means, needs no more proof and demonstration of that than his very character. He is heir of the world; he is Prince and Saviour; he is King in Sion; he is set up above all principality and power; as the Scripture speaks these and divers other things of him:—and doth any man need more evidence of his being judge of all the world?

But our question is, How is that inferred or argued from his resurrection?

The resurrection of Christ did beget and effectuate a double resurrection; for you have mention of a twofold resurrection in Scripture.

First; There is mention of the first resurrectionⁱ; the millenary, not able to clear the notion whereof, nor to spell out the meaning, hath bewildered himself in those wild conceptions, as he hath done. The ‘first resurrection’ began and took place presently after our Saviour’s own resurrection; for it means no other than the raising the heathen from their death in sin, blindness and idolatry, to the life,

^g Rom. i. 4.

^h Acts, xiii. 33.

ⁱ Rev. xx. 5.

light, and obedience, of the gospel. And so the apostle titles their estate, writing to the Ephesians^k, which had been some of them; "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." And to that very tenor are those words of the prophet Isaiah^l, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise." The Gentiles to be raised from their spiritual death, presently upon his raising from his bodily. And whoso shall well weigh those words of our Saviour^m, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear, shall live,"—will clearly find them to mean nothing else. So that the resurrection of Christ had first influence and virtue to cause this spiritual resurrection; the resurrection of souls, the raising up of the Gentiles from the death of sin. And whence it had this influence, it is easy to read,—viz. because, by his resurrection, he had conquered the devil, who had so long kept the poor heathen under that spiritual death.

Will you have a commentary upon that passage, in Psalm cx. 3, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power?" First, His resurrection-day of powerⁿ; then look into the story of the Acts of Apostles, the history of the times next following his resurrection. You may wonder there, to see people coming in by flocks and thousands, to the acknowledgment and entertaining of the gospel, three thousand at one sermon, chap. ii; five thousand at another, chap. iii; and farther in that book, in a little time, the gospel running through the world, and embraced and entertained of all nations. O, it was "the day of his power; and thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." He had now conquered hell and Satan by his death and rising again, whose captives those poor heathens had been two-and-twenty hundred years: and now he said to the captives, 'Go free,'—and to the prisoners, 'Go forth;' and so they did.

And, upon the very like account, his resurrection hath influence to the causing and effectuating the general resurrection at the last day. For though it might be a little too long, to hold, that the wicked shall be raised by the very same virtue of Christ's resurrection that the godly shall,—yet it is not too large to hold, that they shall be raised by some virtue of his resurrection;—viz. as his resurrection had

^k Eph. ii. 1.^l Chap. xxvi. 19.^m John, v. 25.ⁿ Rom. i. 4.

conquered death, and brought him to those articles, that he must, in time, give up and restore all prisoners and dead, that they may come and give account to him that conquered him. "I have the keys of the grave and death," saith he, in the Revelation. He had wrung the keys out of the jailor's hand, and opened the prison-doors, that the prisoners should come out, when he calls.

Very observable to the purpose we are upon,—viz. that Christ's resurrection did assure that judgment, and that he should be judge, is that in Phil. ii. 8, 9, "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross : wherefore, also, God hath highly exalted him." Obedience was that debt, that was to be paid to God. Whereas much stress is laid upon the torments that Christ suffered ; it is very true, that he suffered as much, as, I may say, God could lay upon him, short of his own wrath, and as much as the devil could, with all his wrath :—but that was not the debt, that was due and to be paid to God. Wrath, and torment, and damnation, was rather the debt, that was to be paid to man :—but the debt was obedience. For easy is it to observe, how Satan had got the day of God,—as, with reverence, I may speak it,—when he had brought the chief creature of God's creation, and, in him, all mankind, to disobey God, and to be obedient to him ;—and had carried it for ever, had not an obedience been paid again to God, that outvied that disobedience. How might Satan triumph,—“Man, that is the darling creature to the Creator, and that is set up lord and ruler of all creatures, and to whom even the angels are appointed to be ministering spirits,—I have brought this brave gallant to forsake his Creator, and to follow and obey me.”—But forth steps this noble champion of God, and, in the ‘form of a servant,’ encounters this triumpher, and, maugre all his spite, and power, and vexatiousness, he pays God an obedience, incomparably beyond the obedience, that Adam should have paid ; incomparably outweighing the disobedience, that Adam showed. He paid an obedience, that should answer for the disobedience of all his people : an obedience, that should be a stock for all his people. Nay, he paid an obedience, that outvied all the disobediences of all men and devils : for, he paid an obedience, that was infinite.

Now, his resurrection did demonstrate, that he had made

full payment; or else Satan and death might have kept him still in the grave, their prison,—if a farthing had been yet unpaid.

Now, he having, by his resurrection, consummated the payment of so great obedience, and vindicated the honour and quarrel of God against his enemies; in all justice and equity, the Lord exalted him above all, that all should be subject and homagers to him, and that he might take account of, and reward accordingly, those that obey him, and that obey him not. And so the Lord “hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness,” by him, whereof “he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he raised him from the dead.”

And are you assured, that there will be such a day, and such a judgment, and such a Judge,—and you, and you, and you? Then, men and brethren, what have we to do? Let me first propose this supposal:—

Suppose this very day were the day, that God hath appointed to judge all the world;—and that this assize of our county should be turned into the universal assizes of all the world. Suppose that, instead of the soundings of the high-sheriff’s trumpets, we should have the great trump sound, and call, “Arise, ye dead, and away, you living, and come to judgment!” art thou prepared to meet thy God, O Israel? Art thou prepared to meet that judgment, O Israel? How many, or rather, how few, of us are able to say, ‘My heart is ready, my heart is ready; come, Lord Jesus, come, and welcome!’ Such a call will undoubtedly once come, and we cannot tell how soon; and, when it comes, it will not be at that lenity that Festus used with Paul, “Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and be judged before me of these things:” but, “For all these things, God will bring thee to judgment,” whether thou wilt or no.

O, what shrugging, and unwillingness, and drawing back, would there be, with too many! O, “a little more time, a little more respite, a little more space of repentance and making ready.”—No; time must be no more; no way else, but thou must away, and go to judgment.—How wholesome, therefore, is that counsel,—and O! that there were such a heart in this people, as to take the lesson out,—2 Pet. iii. 11—14, “Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy

conversation and godliness!" And "seeing, beloved, that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless."

How large a discourse might be made for the setting on of this exhortation, from the several particulars in the text;—that the day is certainly appointed; that the judgment will be of all the world; that it will be in righteousness; that it will be by Christ. Another hour would be too little, a whole day would be little enough; and the meditation of it may well take up our whole lives.

The same apostle, that speaks the words here, hath epitomized them all into two words, in the place I cited before, Heb. vi. 2, 'eternal judgment.' Boanerges, two words of thunder, 'judgment,' and that 'eternal,'—words of a dreadful sound; and yet I know not a fitter motto to be written over all our occasions. "Eternal judgment,"—a very fit sentence to be written over a bench of judgment,—over a jury's chamber-door,—in all our chambers,—over all our doors,—in all our hearts; that, looking upon, and remembering always, eternal judgment, we may learn righteousness.

Every assize is a picture, in little, of this great assize, that is to be of all the world; and that, that draweth the truest lineaments of it and most to life, is righteous and impartial dealing. I say, 'righteous and impartial dealing,' rather than 'righteous and impartial judging;' because there may be righteous and impartial judging, where there is unrighteous and partial dealing.

You will say this is a paradox, or rather a contradiction; and you will say the like, or rather much more, if I should say, that 'there may be righteous judging, when there is not righteous judgment;'—and yet, if you weigh these things in your thoughts, you will find, that they are the words of truth and soberness.

A worthy, upright, good judge, judgeth according to the evidence that is given in, and the testimony that is laid before him: here his judging is right and righteous, because he judgeth according to his conscience, and according to his evidence; but it proves that the evidence was false, and the testimony deceiving: here the judgment is not right, because not according to the very truth of the case; although the judging of the judge be righteous, because according to his conscience and sincerity of his heart.

And herein, indeed, our assizes seem short of picturing the great assize to the full proportion, as the thing, signifying, commonly comes short of the thing signified; because there can be no surprisal of the Judge Eternal by any false information,—here the best and wisest judge may be so surprised. And so was once as good and as wise a judge as any we have upon record, and that was David,—being deceived by the false information of wretched Ziba, to pass a most unjust sentence against innocent Mephibosheth, and to give away all his land to the cheating informer.

Therefore, if I should apply myself to give direction to those, that have to do in this great business that lies before you, I should not be so arrogant as to offer to do it to you, my Honoured Lords, who know your works far better than myself. No, I shall not so much as offer to give you a caution, that you be not surprised by false information; your own wisdom and grave prudence prevent all need of such exhortation. I should rather apply myself to witnesses and juries,—which, it may be, are not many of them here,—to admonish them to deal in the fear of the Lord, and in remembrance of the eternal judgment: that they go not about to deceive the Lord's and the king's vicegerents, by any false colours or dissimulation; that they bring not double and redoubled guilt upon their own heads; that there be no cozening Ziba among them, that, for base ends or by ends of their own, shall go about to wrong an innocent Mephibosheth, or to abuse a good David, by fair but false suggestions, to induce him to do contrary to right and equity.

A SERMON^a,

PREACHED AT

HERTFORD ASSIZE,

AUGUST 6, 1669.

JOHN, XVIII. 31.

Then Pilate said unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews, therefore, said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.

A STRANGE assize is the evangelist recording in his story here: the Judge of all the world judged and condemned: and he, before whose tribunal all sinners must once stand, standing and falling before a sinful tribunal: such a person sentenced, such injustice in that sentence, that the world never did, never must, see its parallel.

But “who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do such a thing?”—as Ahasuerus once, in a far lesser matter. And the answer may be given in the words of Esther, that immediately follow, the name only changed, “The adversary and the enemy is this wicked Pilate: the adversaries and the enemies are these wicked Jews,” whom you have discoursing in the words of the text; and whom you have acting all along this tragedy.

Whose ‘persons,’ logical method calls upon us first to consider,—and then to consider of their words and discourse.

Pilate said, and the *Jews* answered.—Persons; if you look wistly upon them, you may see more than their bare persons. For you may read the Roman power and tyranny in the one, and the Jews’ malice and mischievousness in the other: and, upon the full view, the Roman and the Jew conspiring together and becoming guilty of this horridest fact that ever was committed under the sun,—the murdering of the Lord of life and glory.

Let us begin first with Pilate, who stands first in mention in the text, as he stands representative of Rome, whose

^a English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1110.

authority he carried, and whose tyranny, in this case, he exercised. Methinks, there is hardly a more remarkable passage in the whole book of the Revelation, than that, chap. xiii. 2; "The dragon gave his power, and seat, and great authority, unto the beast:"—which, in plain English, is this, 'The devil gave his power, and seat, and great authority, to Rome.' For that, by the 'dragon,' is meant the 'devil,' there is none but grant; and that, by the 'beast,' is meant 'Rome,' even Romanists themselves do not deny. When you read that passage in St. Luke, iv. 5, 6, that "the devil showed our Saviour all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them,"—do you not presently conceive, that he showed him Rome her empire and glory? For then, where was the pomp and glory of the world, but within that city and empire? And when you read that he said unto him, "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them,"—do you not presently conceive, that he offered to make him Cæsar, or lord of that vast empire, "if he would fall down and worship him?" And how pat do these words of his,— "for that is delivered to me, and to whomsoever I will, I give them," agree with these in the Revelation, "The dragon gave his power, and seat, and great authority, unto the beast!"

It neither is, nor indeed could be, said so of the other monarchies or empires, that had gone before. It is not said, the dragon gave his power to the Babylonian empire, nor to the Persian, nor Grecian, nor Syro-grecian:—nor, indeed, could it be so truly and pertinently said so concerning them, as concerning Rome. For the dragon had a business for Rome to do, which the other neither did nor could do for him,—which was, to put the Lord of life to death. The old serpent knew from of old, that he was to "bruise the heel of the seed of the woman," that he was to compass the death of Messias; and it was reserved to Rome, and her power and tyranny, to be the instrument of such an action. And the dragon gave his power, seat, and authority, to that city for that purpose, that it might do his business in murdering Christ, and his members after him.

Pilate, who carried with him the authority and commission of that city, confessed him innocent, and yet condemned him; pleaded for him, that he was not guilty, and yet crucified him: and that mainly upon the account of

Rome, and for her sake; because, forsooth, there must be no king but Cæsar, or who was set up or kinged by Cæsar.

In Rev. xi. 8, where mention is made of slaying the two witnesses, it is said, “their dead carcasses shall lie in the streets of that great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” The last clause, “where also our Lord was crucified,” may seem to direct your eyes to Jerusalem; but the title, ‘The great city,’ which, chap. xvii. 18, is defined, ‘The great city, which ruleth over the kings of the earth,’—calls them back again to look at Rome, as our Lord’s crucifier: by whom that work must be done, or not done at all; for to such a tenor do the Jews tell Pilate in the text, when they say, “It is not lawful for *us*.”

Before ever I should turn Romanist, I must be satisfied in this scruple and question,—How comes the Jew and Jerusalem, so cursed a place and nation for the murder of our Lord, and the Romanist and Rome, so blessed, as to be the holy mother-church of all the world,—when that city and nation had as deep and bloody a hand in the murder of the Saviour of the world, as the other, if not deeper?

I remember the story of one of the grand seigniors, that, when he had received a foul and base foil before a poor and contemptible town, Scodra,—if I mistake not the name,—for very rancour and vexation, and that he might be whetting on himself continually to revenge,—commanded him that waited nearest on him, to be minding him continually with these words, “Remember Scodra.” May I be so bold as to hint such a memorandum to you against Rome. As oft as you read, or rehearse, or hear rehearsed, that article in our Creed, ‘He suffered under Pontius Pilate,’—“Remember Rome,” and that under that, it was, our Saviour suffered. And the article minds you of so much: and if it were not intended for such a memorandum, had it not been enough to have said ‘He suffered,’ without any mention of ‘Pontius Pilate’ at all?—Let us reason with the Romanist, a little, after the manner of his own logic. He argues thus; “Peter was at Rome, and sat bishop there, and suffered martyrdom, and died there; ergo, Rome is the mother-church, and head of all churches.” We argue in like manner,—“Pilate was at Jerusalem, sat judge there, condemned and crucified the Lord of life there, and that by the power and authority of Rome;

ergo, let Rome look to it, how she clears herself of that fact and guiltiness."—And so I have done with the first party in mention in the text, Pilate, and he invested with the Roman authority.

The other party are the Jews, more peculiarly the Sanhedrim, invested also with the Jewish power, and representatives of the whole nation. How busy and active the Jews were in this bloody business, needs no illustration of mine; the sacred pens of the evangelists have done that abundantly.

Only I might speak to this circumstance, and not impertinent question, Whether the Jews did not indeed think him to be the Messias, and yet murdered him?

Pilate condemned him, though he knew him innocent; and did not they murder him, though they knew him to be the very Christ?

Methinks, that passage in the parable^a, of the husbandmen in the vineyard, speaks very fairly for the affirmative; "When the husbandmen saw the Son, they said, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance." They knew him to be the heir; and yet they kill him; nay, they kill him, because they know him to be the heir, and that, by killing him, they shall get the inheritance. It is said^b, indeed, "they knew him not;" which if you interpret, that they knew not the dignity of his person, and that he was God as well as man [the Jews will not be persuaded of the Godhead of Messias to this day], that does not deny, but that they might take him for the Messias howsoever. But I shall not dispute this case. If they took him for Messias, they thought he was not a Messias for their turn, nor that he was likely to answer their expectation, in what their wretched traditions had taught them to look for from Messias. For,

I. From Messias they expected pomp and stateliness, a royal and victorious kingdom: they see him appear in a low condition, and contemptible poverty.

II. From Messias they expected an advancing and heightening the rites of Moses: they saw, that he began to take them down.

III. By the Messias they expected to be redeemed and delivered from their subjection to the Roman yoke. He

^a Matt. xxi. 38.

^b Acts, xiii. 27.

taught them to give Cæsar his due, and to submit to the government God had set over them.

IV. By the Messiah they expected, that the Gentiles should be subdued, trod under their feet, and destroyed: he taught, that they should be called, converted, and become the church.

So that, if they took him for Messiah, they thought he was a Messiah, that would mar all,—and was far unlike the Messiah, their traditions had taught them to look for. And, therefore, be he Messiah or no, they will rather kill the heir, than they themselves lose the inheritance; which, they thought, they should have done, if he should have lived.

It were worth the labour, if that were the task that were before us, to trace these two nations, Jew and Roman, after this fact, as I may say, by the blood;—and to consider, as they made themselves yoke-fellows, like Simeon and Levi, in this guilt and evil,—so, whether God yoked not them also together, under the like curse and vengeance.

Yoke-fellows, indeed, are the Jew and Romanist, above all the people of the world, in a deluded fancying their own bravery and privilege above all the world besides. He that comes to read the Jewish writings, especially those that are of the nature of sermons, will find this to be the main stuffing of them, almost in every leaf and page; “How choice a people is Israel! how dearly God is in love with Israel! what a happy thing it is to be the seed of Abraham! how blessed the nation of the Jews above all nations!”—and such stuff as this all along. And is not the style of the Romanist to the very same tune? ‘How holy the church of Rome! how glorious the religion of the church of Rome! what superiority and pre-eminence hath the church above all churches! and all the men in the world are heretics, and apostates, and castaways, if they be not Romanists.’ Whereas, if both the nations would but impartially look upon themselves, they would see, that there are such brands upon them two, as are upon no nation under heaven, now extant; I shall but glance at these few particulars:—

I. Is not the Jew antichrist,—viz. 2 Thess. ii. 3? Examine the place seriously, and compare it with 1 John ii. 18, and with 2 John, 7, and other places in the Epistles; and you may see it plain. And is not Rome antichrist in the Re-

velation? Rome herself doth not deny it, if you allow her but her distinction of 'heathen' and 'Christian.'

II. Have you not observed a horrid apostasy in the apostle's time in the church of the Jews, of those who had embraced the gospel? Evidences are abundant in the New Testament; I shall name but two. All Asia is fallen away, and departed from Paul at one clap: "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia, are turned away from me^c." And, in Matt. xii. 45, our Saviour compares that generation to one that had the devil cast out of him, but he returns again into him with seven worse devils; "so shall it be (saith he) to this wicked generation."

And who, also, hath not observed a horrid apostasy in the church of Rome (they themselves only excepted, who will not see) from that faith and religion, for which that city was once renowned through the whole world, Rom. i. 8? And that direful apostasy in the Christian church of the Jews, was never so matched and paralleled in the world, as by the apostasy in the church of Rome.

III. Were there ever two nations, two churches, under heaven, so besotted with traditions, and the doctrines of men, as the Jew and Roman? Weigh them well together; and is not that as true of the Roman to every tittle, that our Saviour speaks of the Jew^d; "That they had made the commandment of God of none effect by their traditions, and that they taught for doctrines the commandments of men?"

He that shall seriously compare their doctrines together, about 'opus operatum,' 'sin venial,' 'the merit of works,' 'purgatory,' 'free-will,' 'the point of justification,'—and multitudes of other points in religion and divine worship,—will see the Romanist has gone to school to the Jew: and, indeed, the scholar is not a whit behind the master.

IV. And, to spare more, is not the Jew doomed to a perpetual curse in that passage^e; "Ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen?" And in other passages of like nature, that might be produced, not a few.

And is not Rome doomed to perpetual perdition in that passage^f; "Ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber; and he [Chittim] shall perish for ever." Where 'Chittim' is 'Rome' or

^c 2 Tim. i. 15.

^d Matt. xv. 3. 9.

^e Isa. lxxv. 15.

^f Num. xxiv. 24.

Italy,' by the consent both of Jews and Christians, both of Protestants and even Romanists themselves.

And thus much concerning the 'persons' before us; Pilate and the Jews, representatives of the Jewish and Roman nation, actors of the Jewish malice and Roman tyranny.

And now let us consider their 'words;' the handling of which will bring our discourse nearer the present occasion.

Pilate said, "Take him," &c. for he very well knew they might do so, for any restraints the Romans, who were their lords, had put upon them in that case. Josephus tells us, the Romans suffered them to live by their own laws and religion; and he records a speech, that Titus, their conqueror, made to them, while he besieged their city,—to persuade them to yield, in which he useth this argument:—"The Romans have always permitted you to live by your own laws; and why, then, should you rebel against them?" And he also records a speech, that himself made to them to the same purpose, to persuade them to yield, in which he useth the very same argument. And, certainly, Pilate did not speak it in a way of jeering of them; when he bid them "Take him," &c. as knowing they were restrained by the Romans.

They, though such a restraint were not upon them, yet answer, "It is not lawful," &c. "It is not lawful," i. e. "we cannot; we may not; it is not in our power;" for such a construction will the Greek expression very well bear. And if they used their own Jerusalem language, I doubt not but their words were לֹא רָשָׁא, which is an expression very obvious and frequent in the writers in that language, and signifies in that latitude, as to mean, "we have not liberty, power, privilege."

Now, how, or when, or whereupon, did they lose this power?—If the Romans had taken it away from them, how then did they afterward arraign, and condemn, and execute St. Stephen,—and would have done no less, without all doubt, to St. Paul, if they might have had their own way? And their own stories tell us of their judging and condemning to the fire, after this, a priest's daughter, for playing the whore in her father's house; and execution was done accordingly. And yet, they say, 'they cannot judicially put any man to death;' which power, indeed, if they had lost, they lost it more like fools, than like slaves; and it was not at all taken

from them by the Romans, but they let it drop from them by their own folly.

Their own writers and records do tell us, at what pass it was with them at this time, in this manner:

“Forty years (say they) before the destruction of the temple, did the great Sanhedrim, or chief court or council, rise, and depart out of the room Gazith; and then the power of judging in capital matters was taken away from Israel.” Gazith, the room where this great court sat, was in the court of the temple near unto the altar; or, as themselves express it, “near to the divine presence,” which, they supposed, dwelt upon the altar, and looked on them how they acted in judgment. They thought, therefore, that by the very reverence and venerableness of the place, and presence, they were bound to judge malefactors, and to execute them unfailingly, which, at the last, they saw, they could not do; and therefore they resolve to rise, and depart from that place.

The case was now with them much like to that gloss of some of the Hebrew writers upon the first words of the book of Ruth. The words properly are thus:—“It came to pass in the days, when the judges judged.” But they invert it thus: “It came to pass in the days, when they judged the judges.” And a shrewd inversion indeed, when the people judge their judges, and malefactors awe and overpower the magistracy. And just such was their case now. Their country did so swarm with all manner of wickedness and villanies, that they were grown beyond the correction of the magistracy, that they out-dared the magistracy:—as Jezebel. The Sanhedrim could not, durst not, judge them. Nay, these go farther than defy and dare; they even conquer and master. So that not any but is glad to yield and resolve, that they will not go about to punish such villanies and wickedness any more; for they saw that it was but in vain to go about it, and that they could not do it without their own danger. And so their own records tell us, “That adulteries were grown so common and open, that the Sanhedrim determined, there should be no more trial of the suspected or adulterous wife by the bitter waters, which God had prescribed, Numb. v: That murders were so common and ordinary, that the Sanhedrim determined, there should be no more the beheading of a heifer, which God had prescribed

for the expiation of an uncertain murder, Deut. xxi: And murderers so numerous, and potent, and impudent, that the magistrate could not, durst not, judge them, for fear of being themselves murdered. And therefore the great Sanhedrim resolves, Come, let us rise, and sit here no longer; for it is better for us to rise and depart hence, than, by sitting here, to contract guilt to ourselves, when the very place challengeth from us, that we do judgment and execution, and we cannot do it. And so they rose, and went thence; and then ceased and failed the judging of capital offenders throughout all the courts of Israel." And this account do their writers and records give, how it came to pass that they lost that power, that they could not, might not, put any malefactor to death. And so you have a commentary of their own nation and historians, upon their words here in the text. I might yet add farther from them;

1. That sometimes they returned to the hall, or room Gazith, to sit upon capital offenders, as blasphemers, false prophets, notoriously incestuous, &c, when they thought good; but never returned thither to sit upon murder.

2. That when they did sit there, and judged and sentenced, yet they hardly ever executed, but referred the offenders to the punishment of God. And they will tell you, that 'God, at one time or other, did bring them to some kind of death in some sort suitable to that, the Sanhedrim should have put them to.'

Sometimes, indeed, malice and spite made them venture an execution doing, when they saw they might do it without their own danger,—when they executed St. Stephen for a heretic, and Bensatda for a seducer; if, by him, they meant not our Saviour himself.

But that, that we have the most reason to consider of, is, how the nation came to this pass of vice and villany, that vice and villany were not only incorrigible, but were grown terrible to those that should correct them: wickedness strong, and magistracy feeble: murders, plunderings, assassinations, all manner of abominations, swarming,—and no power in them that were in power, to punish them.

Not to speak of the secret disposal of God, for the executing of his vengeance upon that sinful nation, in giving them up to themselves and to confusion, but to look only at those things that are apparent.

I. The growth of villany was from the not punishing of villanies in time: and the magistrates' want of executing judgment made them lose the power of executing judgment. And they could not punish malefactors when they should, because they would not do it, when they might. The sword of justice rusted in the scabbard, that they could not draw it,—because they let it rest in the scabbard, when they should have drawn it.

As that generation was the wickedest, that the earth had carried in our Saviour's character; "A wicked and adulterous generation, a faithless and perverse generation, a serpent and viper generation," a generation wicked above expression, as appears by that expression of the prophet Isaiah^g, "Who shall declare his generation?"—i. e. the generation wherein he lived:—so the same prophet, speaking of the very same time and generation, shows from whence the above wickedness of the generation grew^h, "Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: truth is fallen in the streets, and equity cannot enter. And it displeased the Lord, that there was no judgment." Which very scripture the Jews themselves do produce to prove, that the Messiah should come in the worst of times and generations. Now,

II. There were two things, that hindered and spoiled the execution of justice and judgment, like two worms lying at the root of judicature; that like the worm, that smote Jonah's gourd, killed execution of judgment at the very root, that that tree was clean blasted, dried up, and withered.

The first, let me emblem by this homely emblem;—The ape loving and hugging her young so dearly, that she hugs, and presses, and crushes, them to death. They had so foolish and fond a prizing and tenderness to a Jew forsooth, because he was a Jew, that that very fondness helped to hug and crush the nation to this confusion and ruin. O 'noli tangere,' meddle not with him so severely; he is an Israelite of the seed of Abraham; he is not to be dealt with, as you would with another man.—I could tire you with evidences of this fondness and folly in multitudes of instances. I shall but give you one of their own stories:—

A father sent out his son to hire labourers to come to work with him. The son agreed with him for so much mo-

^g Chap. liii. 8.

^h Isaiah, lix. 14.

ney a day, and meat and drink; when his father understood, that he had agreed to find them their diet, "Ah, son (saith he), what hast thou done? Though thou shouldest keep as noble and royal a table for them as ever Solomon did, thou couldest never make good thine agreement for their diet; for they are the children of Abraham, and no treatment or entertainment can rise up to their desert and dignity." John Baptist very well knew, how high their pulse beat upon this delirium, when he bids, "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father:" for this, they thought, was privilege enough, and would serve for all things.

It was the doctrine of their schools and pulpits, "That every Israelite was to have a portion in the world to come, in the benefits and happiness of the days of Messias;" for so the expression means there. And why, I pray you, every Israelite?—Why, forsooth, because he is an Israelite. And this very maxim learnt, and believed, and taught, by Nicodemus, made the Pharisee at a nonplus, when our Saviour told him, he could not see the kingdom of heaven or Messias, except he were born again. For he thought his being born a Jew and Israelite, would serve well enough for that purpose; and that he needed no more.

I could produce you instances in their own authors, where this very argument is used, to check and hinder execution of justice upon a malefactor Jew: "O do it not, for he is a child of Abraham, of the stock of Israel, and flock of God: though never so horrid a villain, yet, O do not put him to death, for he is a Jew."—Nay, they stick not to tell, that Elias himself hath appeared to hinder the execution of malefactors with this very argument. And some of their great doctors and grandees have not stuck to say, That that Sanhedrim, that puts one man to death in seven years, nay, in seventy years, is a bloody court; and, "if we had been in those times (say they) when executions were done, there should never have been any in our time done."

Needed there any other seed for the breeding of mischief and villany in the land, of all sorts and sizes, and without number, than such a fond and senseless principle and practice as this? Sow but such remissness of executing justice and judgment in a nation, and presently you will have a very plentiful crop of all manner of mischief, like that hem-

lock crop in Hoseaⁿ, "Judgment springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field."

By the way, upon this fond and mad principle of theirs, of Jew-prizing, I cannot but observe these two things:—

I. Their deadly spleen and malice against our Saviour, when, contrary to this their national principle, they did not only pursue him eagerly to put him to death, but for that end, delivered him up to the heathen power; which, I question, whether they had ever done so by Jew before.

II. How heavy the hand and vengeance of God was upon them, in their civil wars and seditions among themselves, when, contrary to their nation-principle of Jew-prizing, they fell Jew to destroy Jew, the seed of Abraham to murder the seed of Abraham, in the horridest assassinations and distractiveness, that any story recordeth.

A second hinderer and destroyer of the execution of justice among them, I may emblem by that foolish Roman emperor, that, while he should have been busied in consulting and taking care about the great affairs of state, he made it a very great business and employment he followed, to catch flies.—Our Saviour tells^o you, these men did much the like; "You tithe mint, and annise, and cummin, and have omitted the great things of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith."—They were punctual about things of little or no weight,—and remiss about matters of moment, and the greatest import; severe about things, that were, indeed, as good as nothing,—and careless about those things, that were, indeed, all in all. Like Israel, at the battle of Gibeah^p, zealous to avenge the quarrel and injury of a whorish woman, the Levites' concubine,—but never mind the avenging of the quarrel and injury, done to God by the setting up Micah's and the Danites' idol. They were extreme punctual in requiring the washing of hands before meat; but, as our Saviour tells them, their tradition gave leave to starve their parents, with saying, 'corban,' or, 'let whatsoever I should relieve thee by, be dedicated for sacred;' and they made no matter of letting father or mother perish for want of sustenance. They were very exact in looking, that no one should come into the mount of the temple with staff in hand, or shoes on their feet, or their purse at their girdle, against which they had a strict law; but they made nothing to keep a market, or fair,

ⁿ Chap. x. 4.

^o Matt. xxiii. 22.

^p Judg. xix.

of oxen, and sheep, and doves, there: they had tabernæ, shops there, where they sold salt, and oil, and frankincense, and such things, as they used about the altar. And the Sanhedrim itself, when it removed out of the room Gazith, came and sat down close by those shops, and never queached at it, to make the temple a house of merchandise. What a deal of do do they keep about our Saviour's healing on the sabbath-day! but when a woman is taken in adultery, in the very act, the Sanhedrim brings her to our Saviour, to lay a trap for him, by trying what he would determine in that case: but of more done to her, for her crime, you have no news. And to spare more, he that reads their pandects and canons, and their determinations and debates there, may justly stand amazed, to see how serious and grave they be in a thousand things, that are but trash and chaff, and that deserve nothing but laughter,—and how slight and little looking after these great things, that concern true piety, justice, charity, and a holy life:—how smartly they measure the violation of a tradition of the elders about toys and trifles, and take no notice of the violation of the divine law of God, about the greatest matter. And so our Saviour speaks enough of this, in that short passage, “Ye strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.” Those traditions were the ruin of religion and justice in the nation, and proved, consequently, the utter ruin of the nation itself.

It is observable, concerning that unhappy nation, that, before their captivity into Babylon, they were all for idolatry; but, after their return out of captivity, they abhorred idolatry, but were all for traditions: they changed naught for naught, or rather naught for worse. For, indeed, their traditions, one may justly say, were more destructive than their idolatry. Their traditions wrought them and brought them to murder the Lord of life and glory, which their idolatry would hardly ever have brought them to. And the very principles of their traditions were such, that they had not been right scholars in that school, they had not been faithful to their principles, if they had not destroyed him. So directly contrary to the tenor of the gospel, and to the quality and appearance of Christ, were those cursed traditions, that if they sought not, with all might and main, to destroy them, and root them out, the beast did not work according to the nature of the beast, but clean contrary to it.

It is very generally conceived, that God rejected that nation, for the murder of the Lord of life: and that was a very just cause and reason, why they were rejected. But if I should say, God rejected the bulk and mass of that nation, long before the death of Christ, for those cursed traditions, I believe, I should not speak it without good proof and warrant. And it is observable, that John Baptist calls them “a generation of vipers;” which, in plain English, is, ‘the seed of the serpent,’ at his first preaching among them.—And it is observable, that which we are upon, that wickedness and villanies were grown so abounding, and so predominant, that they were past the magistrates’ correcting, before ever our Saviour comes to be arraigned. And it is no wonder, they were grown so abounding and predominant,—when their very principles led them to make crimes of those, that were but trifles,—and no crimes of those, that were crimes indeed; to omit the great things of the law, whereby they might have beaten down cruelty, dishonesty, and debauchery,—and to make all their business only about toys, only for the promoting of formality and hypocrisy, and seeming goodness.

And thus you see wickedness uncorrected, till it grow incorrigible: an unhappy magistracy asleep, till it wake, like Samson, with the locks of his strength cut, and overpowered by the Philistines: and a miserable nation bleeding to death, and weltering in its own blood, because the physician would not let blood, when he should have done, in due time, and in the right vein.

And now do I need to say any thing by way of application? As the apostle concerning Abel, “He being dead, yet speaketh;”—so I of Judea, “she is here dying; and do you not hear her speak?”—Nay, as he of old, “Loquere, ut te videam,”—“Do you not see her speak?” The very looking on her may read a lecture.—As the Lacedemonians read a silent lecture against drunkenness to their children, only by showing them their slaves swine-drunk,—so it is a silent lecture against neglecting of the execution of justice and judgment, and against partiality in executing of judgment and justice, only to look upon her, and her undone condition.

It is well known to “you all, that pass by: behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, that is done unto me.”—‘And who wrought it to thee, O unhappy na-

tion?"—"Oh! I was wounded in this house of my friends. Folly and fondness, partiality and foolish tenderness, sloth and sleepiness, have been my undoing. 'Discite justitiam moniti.' Take warning by my fate, all nations and countries; and set yourselves to execute judgment, and do justice, lest wickedness grow, that there be no curbing, and so vengeance follow, that there be no healing."

The grandees of that nation, though so careless as to practise this, will tell you, that all the six hundred and thirteen precepts, contained in the law of Moses, are couched and included within those two in Isaiah^a, "Keep judgment, and do justice." And, indeed, how much, and how great things are included in those two, keeping or observing judgment in causes controversial, and doing just in causes criminal! The Greek poet will tell you,—

Ἐν δὲ δικαιοσύνῃ συλλήβδην πᾶς ἀρετὴ ἔστι.

"That, in justice, is comprehended all virtue;" and the Scripture will tell you, that under the name of 'righteousness,' is comprehended 'all piety,'—by the use of the name, 'a righteous man,' for, 'one after God's own heart.'

I might speak, how much piety is comprehended in doing justice, and how much charity, how much service to God, how much benefit to the country:—but need I to illustrate these things, that are so plain?

It is something strange, and not to be passed by without observation, that, in the New Testament, in several places, the second table is cited, and taken for the whole law, without mention of the first table at all. In Matt. xix. 16, when a man comes and asks, "what he should do to have eternal life?" Christ bids him, "keep the commandments." When he demands, 'which?' He refers him only to the second table, "Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Honour thy father and thy mother. And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."—You have the like reference to the second table, Rom. xiii. 8, "Owe nothing to any man, but to love one another: for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law." And there going to reckon up the commandments of the law, he mentions only those of the second table. And you may observe the apostle St. James, using the same style; "If ye fulfil the royal law according

^a Chap. lvi. 1.

^r James, ii. 8.

to the Scripture, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' ye do well."

What then is the younger sister fairer than the elder,—the second table more lovely than the first,—that Jacob must serve his apprenticeship for Rachel the younger, rather than for Leah the elder?

As Micah^s, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of thee,—to do justly, and love mercy." For these two are the Urim and Thummim of the second table, the very life of true Christian piety, and of a true Christian's acting. And the Lord thus directs men to the duties of the second table, as the touchstone of piety, whereby to try, whether we love God, by our love to our neighbour; whether he will do God right, by doing right to his neighbour. If time would permit, I might speak,

I. How great a duty justice is of the second table.

II. How great a charity to a place or country.

III. How great a tie upon all, not judges and magistrates only, but juries, witnesses, all in their places to promote it.

IV. How great a misery, and undoing of a nation, to have the current of it stopped.

* Chap. vi. 8.

A SERMON^a,
PREACHED
AT ELY ASSIZE,

SEPT. 12, 1671.

JAMES, v. 9.

Behold, the Judge standeth before the door.

THE great court of judicature at Jerusalem sat near the altar of burnt-offerings; half the room where they sat, being in that holy court, where the altar stood. And they thought they were bound to sit so near the altar, as long as they might: and they thought they were bound, while they sat there, to execute impartial justice, because of the nearness of שכינה 'the divine presence,' which, they accounted, was always upon the altar.

A very needful, useful, and proper conception and remembrance for every court of judicature to take up; to think, how near 'the divine presence' is unto them, to overlook them: how God is close by them, near unto them, nay, as David tells us, sitting among them, seeing and observing their doing and demeanour in that great employment: therefore, being to speak to such a court, if I should be so bold as to take on me to direct the way to the impartial administration of justice, I could find no more proper way of direction in that case, than to mind you of the noble copy you have before you,—viz. the great Judge: or if I should set myself to exhort to the execution of it, I could use no more enforcing and persuasive arguments or exhortations, than to mind you, how near this great Judge is unto you: "Behold, the Judge standeth before the door."

But do we behold him? Could we see him with these bodily eyes, as we see that honourable person, I should need to say no more. Such a sight would be text and sermon enough and enough again for us. But is there no other eye to see him that is invisible? It is a true Christian's motto, "I have set the Lord always before me:" and he sees him,

^a English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1116.

though he sees him not; and with God in his eye he frameth all his demeanour, and carriage, and lives, and walks, and does, and suffers, and dies, “as seeing him that is invisible,” as it is said of Moses^a.

But to see him as the great Judge, is, as I may say, a second contemplation of God, and as needful as the first. The first I call that, when the soul contemplates God, as the chiefest, choicest, only, and most desirable good; and so all its affections, desires, and longings, are laid out upon him, striving for the enjoyment of him. But withal the good soul contemplates God, so as to make him his fear and his dread, as well as his portion and delight; he owns him infinitely just, as well as he owns him infinitely good; and as he looks upon him as his God, so he looks upon him as his Judge, “Whom, though I were right, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my Judge^b.”

Such a contemplation of God may the very present occasion call upon us to take up. For can so great and remarkable an occasion pass us, without some spiritual reflection, and heavenly meditation? Occasional meditation, is a second sacred concoction, as I may call it,—that, when the body or sense hath, or hath had, the use of an earthly occurrence, turns it to the good and nourishment of the soul. And shall such an occasion as this you are now entering on, pass without some such beneficial, spiritual, improvement? For what kind of heart does he carry, that can see the day of an assize, and never think of the great day of judgment? that can see a judge, a tribunal, arraignings, sentencings, and never remember that, “We must all stand before the tribunal seat of Christ:” nor remember with himself, “For all these things God will bring thee to judgment!”

Therefore, ‘sursum corda,’ let us lift up our hearts, and let their thoughts carry us beyond sight and sense, and pick up the honey of some spiritual meditation from so noble a flower. And the text, in some particulars, directs us how to do it,—viz. that, as we see the judge already come, and ready to enter upon the work of the assize, so to remember the great assize is coming, the great Judge is coming. “For he cometh, for he cometh, to judge the earth.” Nay, “behold, he standeth,—behold, he standeth before the door.”

But there may be some question, what is our apostle’s

^a Heb. xi. 27.

^b Job, ix. 15.

immediate, and most intent, and direct sense, in these words. For there are several expressions, of the like nature, in Scripture, which seem to intend, more especially, the nearness of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the Jewish nation. For, as Christ's pouring down his vengeance in the destruction of that city and people, is called his 'coming in his glory,' and his 'coming in judgment;' and as the destruction of that city and nation is characterized in Scripture, as the destruction of the whole world;—so, there are several passages, that speak of the nearness of that destruction, that are suited according to such characters. Such is that in 1 Cor. x. 11, "Upon us the ends of the world are come."—1 Pet. iv. 7, "The end of all things is at hand."—Heb. x. 37, "Yet a little while; and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." And to the very same tendency, may this be, in the words of the text: "Behold, the Judge standeth before the door." As, also, that in the verse before, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

There is very much mention in Scripture of the 'last days,' and both of exceeding much good, and exceeding much evil, that should accrue in them. Our present dealing is about the latter. By the last days are meant the last days of Jerusalem, and of that nation. And there is foretold of them, that, "in the last days, there should be perilous times^c;" that, "in the last days, there should come mockers^d;" that, "in the last times, there should come many antichrists," which was an evidence that those were the last times^e. Under those sad times did the poor professors of the gospel live, till God gave them some recovery and refreshment, by the ruin of the city and nation. They were times of mockings, and scourgings, and imprisonments, and of most bitter persecution of the church, both by the Jews, that never believed, and by apostates, that had believed, but were revolted from the gospel, and become enemies to it. A sad "hour of temptation^f." "Judgment began at the house of God," 1 Pet. iv. 17; "A fiery trial," at the thirteenth verse of the same chapter.

Therefore, the apostles, to bear up the hearts of the poor persecuted and afflicted saints of God, mind them concerning Christ's coming in vengeance against that city and people, to make an end of the persecution, by making an end of

^c 2 Tim. iii. 1. ^d 2 Pet. iii. 3. ^e 1 John, ii. 18. ^f Rev. iii. 10.

persecutors. Instances might be given of this numerously, if I would insist upon it. Such a one, I suppose, is that in the verse before: "Be patient, brethren, till the coming of the Lord: be patient, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." And that, in the verse of the text, "'Grudge not, brethren, one against another, lest you be condemned,' with them that grudge at you, when the Judge cometh to plead their cause, and, 'behold, the Judge standeth before the door.'"

If we should take the words in this sense, and pointing at such a time and matter,—I suppose, it might not be far from the apostle's meaning. But do his words reach no farther? Are not these things written for our learning, as well as for theirs, to whom he wrote? Is it not a truth spoken to us, as well as it was spoken to them, "Behold, the Judge standeth before the door?" Dispute it not; but rather, down on our knees, and bless and magnify the patience and goodness of this Judge,—for that he is standing at the door, and hath not yet broke in upon us.

In handling of the words, I suppose, I need not to spend time in explaining the phrases. For none that hears of this Judge, but he knows who is meant; and none can but know what is meant, by his 'standing at the door,'—viz. as near at hand, and ready to enter. And if the apostle speak here of the nearness of the destruction of Jerusalem, our Saviour's words^s, of the very same subject, may help to explain him; "So likewise ye, when ye see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." So, behold, the Judge is near, 'even at the door.' But the Judge of whom? and, at the door of whom? These shall be the two things, that my discourse shall inquire after.

The Jews, in their pandect, mention several things, of which they say, "they are two, and yet are four:" and when they explain themselves, they show they speak very good sense. I may speak much like of the propositions, that rise out of the words,—that they are two, but indeed are four. The two are these, 'That there is a Judge, or God is a Judge:' and, 'that this Judge stands before the door.' But the very style and expression doth double it; 'that God is the Judge of all, and, that this Judge stands at the door of all:'—because there is no exception about whom he judgeth, nor any exception at whose door he standeth.

I cannot say, it is as essential to God, to be a judge, as it is essential to him to be holy, infinite, eternal, good, &c. because he had been these, had there never been creature to judge; as he was these from eternity, before the creature was: but since there is a creature to judge, I may say, it is as essential to God to be judge of his creature, as it is to be God. For we may truly say, if he were not Judge, he were not God. For what kind of God were that, that had not to do about judging the creature? I need not to produce places of Scripture, to prove that, that is before us; for what more plain, what more frequent, than such testimonies? That “God is Judge himself^h”; that “he is the Judge of all the earthⁱ”; that “he is the Lord, the righteous Judge^j”; that “he sits upon the throne judging right^k”; that “with righteousness he shall judge the world, and the people with equity^l.”

But because the language of the text is, “Behold the Judge!” let me speak, as I may say, unto your eyes, according to the expression, “O generation, see ye the word of the Lord^m.” So let me lead your eyes to behold some specimens of this great Judge’s judging, and some demonstrations and assurances that he hath given, that he will so judge.

Eternal judgment is one of the first principles of Christian religionⁿ;—viz. the judgment that doth determine of every man’s state for eternity; for, of God’s temporal judgments, we shall not speak here. And that judgment is either particular, passed upon every one at death; or general, which shall be at the last day. Of either of these I shall take some prospect.

I. Concerning the particular judgment. When man’s day is done, the day of the Lord begins with him; and when his work is done, he is to receive his wages, according as his work hath been, good or evil. Lazarus and the rich man were no sooner dead, but the one is in torment, and the other in Abraham’s bosom. And how come they there? Conceive you see their passage. The souls of all, good or bad, as soon as ever departed out of the body, are slipped into another world. And what becomes of them there? Do they dispose of themselves? Do they go to heaven or hell by their own disposal? There would never soul go to hell, if it were at those terms.

^h Psal. l. 6.ⁱ Gen. xviii. 25.^j 2 Tim. iv. 8.^k Psal. ix. 5.^l Psal. xcvi. ult.^m Jer. ii. 31.ⁿ Heb. ii. 6.

But the departed soul meets with its Judge, as soon as ever it is departed; and by him it is doomed and disposed to its eternal estate. The Judge stands at the very door of that world of spirits, to dispose of all, that come in there, to their everlasting condition, according as their works have been here, good or evil. So that those words of the apostle^o, as they speak the subsequence of judgment to death, so they may very well speak this nearness, "It is appointed for all men once to die, and then cometh the judgment."

Those words of our Saviour^p are very regardable, "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto him:"—though dead and gone to the world, and to themselves, yet to him they are not dead, but alive; and he deals with them as such as are alive. And though he be not the God of all that so live, yet he is the Judge of them all. He calls himself, "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," when they had been now dead and in the dust a long time; for they lived, though they were dead. And so Cain, and Cham, and Pharaoh, lived, though they were dead; that is, were not utterly extinct; and yet God was far from owning himself the God of Cain, Cham, and Pharaoh, but he was their judge.

And do but think, how these men looked upon their Judge, when they met him. A carnal wretch, that never thinks of God, never dreams of judgment, but is all for his pleasures and delights here, when he dies, and instantly meets his dreadful Judge to doom him;—can any tongue express, what a horrid surprisal that soul is taken at? I cannot but take some scantling of conception of it from that passage^q, "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." The beloved disciple to be thus terrified at the sight of his beloved Master! He that used friendly to lean in his bosom, now to fall at his feet for fear, as dead! And Christ not coming to him neither with any message of terror, but in a friendly manner, with instructions concerning things that were to come to pass thereafter. And if so dreadful a consternation fell upon him, upon meeting and seeing the glory of his dear,—what is the wretched soul's case, when it so unexpectedly meets with the dreadful terrors of its angry, Judge?

II. Concerning this great Judge's judging all the world at the last day, I shall but offer to you that prospect, Rev. xx. 11, 12: "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat

^o Heb. ix. ult.

^p Luke, xx. 30.

^q Rev. i. 17.

on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away; and there was no place found for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and they were judged." Heaven and earth fled away before God,—but no fleeing for small and great, but they must be judged. Heaven and earth, that were in being, are dissolved and gone; but the dead, small and great, that were not in being, are brought into being, that they may be brought to judgment. And so chap. vi. 14, "Heaven departs as a scroll, that is rolled up together; and every mountain and island is removed out of his place." But, in the next verse, there is a world of wretches, that would fain be gone too, but it will not be; would fain be hid, since they cannot go,—but that will not be neither: "That say to the rocks, 'Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?'"

II. Now what assurances or earnest, as I may call them, hath God given of this, that he will judge all the world, which is the second thing I mentioned? I might mention divers. The apostle^q makes the destruction of the world by water, and Sodom by fire, to be such: another apostle^r makes the raising him from the dead, that is to be judge, to be such assurance. But I only name three more: That he hath set up judicatures in the world;—That he hath set up a judicature in every man's soul;—And that he hath given his law and word, by which men must be judged.

I. Are not the tribunals and judicatures, that he hath set up in the world, evidence and assurance given, that he will judge the world? Magistracy,—whose image and superscription doth it carry? The great Cæsar's, the great magistrate of heaven and earth: and if that deal in matters that concern the body, may we not read in it, that he that ordained it, will dispose both of bodies and souls?

Take to thought that of the apostle^s, "Know ye not, that the saints shall judge the world?"—i. e. that a Christian magistracy shall judge among men. And, "Know ye not, that we shall judge angels?"—i. e. that a Christian ministry shall judge against devils.—Weigh the words seriously, and, I believe, you will find them to rise to this sense:—And then know you not, that the ultimate judging of men and

^q 2 Pet. ii. 9.^r Acts, xvii. 31.^s 1 Cor. vi. 2.

devils must rest in him, that instituted magistracy and ministry both? ‘I said, you are Gods;’ for, in your function, you carry his representation and character; but I said, he is much more God, that ordained you Gods,—and he much more magistrate and judge, that ordained you magistrates and judges. In you, judgment is drawn in little; in him, it is in full proportion. “*Filia exscripsit patrem,*” as he of old of a good daughter, “that she had copied out a good father.” Your function hath copied out divine authority: but yours is but a copy,—the original, incomparably fairer.

II. Is not the judicature, that God hath set up in every man’s soul, an undoubted assurance of God’s judging of all? When a very proper definition of conscience, is, that it is ‘*præjudicium judicii,*’ ‘a foretaste, a preface to the judgment to come,’ doth it not give assurance of the judgment to come? and that to every soul, when there is a conscience in every soul. That as our Saviour, when the Jews ask him, what appearance was there of the kingdom of heaven, gives them this answer, “The kingdom of heaven is within you,” as some read it,—so, if any one ask, what proof and assurance is there, that God will judge the world, the proof and assurance is within you. Ask Felix also^t; “As Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.” And how comes a Roman valour to be so shaken at the word of a poor Jew? A great judge trembling at the words of his prisoner? He had that within him, that gave testimony to every word, that Paul spake, that it was true. A strange thing to him as well as a dreadful, to hear of the judgment to come in manner, as the divine orator set it out. But there was that within him, that could not but assent to the truth of all he spake.

III. God’s very giving of his law to the world is an assurance abundant, that he will once judge the world. Let me draw your thoughts to the foot of mount Sinai, to stand with Israel there, while the law is giving. Do you not see the dreadful terror, in which it is given, fire, and smoke, and earthquake, and sound of trumpet? And do you think that the great Lawgiver, that comes in such dread to give it, will never come to demand an account of it, how men have dealt with it? Must those words be scattered in the air, and God never take more care or account of them?

^t Acts, xxiv. 25.

And let me lead your eyes to mount Calvary; and there let them observe the great God, sealing his covenant and gospel in the blood of his own Son. See Christ bleeding there; hands, feet, and heart, bleeding out his last drop of blood, to confirm and seal that truth and gospel, that he had preached to the world. And will God and Christ never take account how men use the gospel, that, as I may say, cost so dear engrossing?

This very thing is an undoubted assurance, that God will judge all the world, because he cannot but call men to account, how they have demeaned themselves to his law and revealed will. As sure as a law and a gospel have been given, so sure a judgment to come, to inquire what usage law and gospel have found among men, and a reward accordingly. The Jews, in their writings, do oft bring in the law complaining to God of injuries done to her by such and such persons, and begging that he would do her right. Hath a despised law, a condemned gospel, a scorned word of God, no cry in the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth? and hath the Lord no care to plead their cause? Are they only to cry to men? and, if men abuse them, have they no cry to God? And hath the despised blood of Christ, and trodden under foot, no cry to God?

I cannot but remember the Talmudish story about Zacharias' blood, that was shed betwixt the temple and the altar,—that no rains, no pains, no water, could wash it off the pavement of the temple, but still and still it was bubbling there, and would never be quiet, till execution of judgment quieted it; the king of Babylon slaying near a hundred thousand persons in the same place. The application is easy: "The judgment" of wicked men "lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not"; their sins will not let them linger and slumber, but continually cry in the ears of God for judgment. The injuries they do to law, gospel, and blood of Christ, will not let them linger nor slumber; but these are continually crying to God to avenge their cause. And will not God avenge his cause?

What need I speak of his sovereignty, challenging, that he dispose of all men's eternal being, as he brought them into being here? What should I speak of his justice, challenging, that every one be rewarded according to his work?

And, indeed, what need I to insist much to prove, that God is judge of all, and that he will bring all to judgment, to any that call themselves Christians, and have the Bible in their hand.

And so I have done with the first double proposition in the text,—viz. That ‘God is judge;’—and ‘judge of all.’—And now briefly to speak to the second duplicity,—viz. ‘He stands before the door;—and ‘before the door of all.’

I know the apostle’s expression means, in general, the judge is near; but if it should come to particularizing of this, or the other, or any person, would he not say the same? And will not any say the same, that will acknowledge a judge or judgment? Who can say, who dares say, the judge stands not before my door? I am sure a good man dares not say so, for he accounts his God and judge near unto him. “Thou compassedst my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.” And if any wretched man dare say so, let him take heed, that he finds not his judge a great deal nearer than he supposes; nay, the nearer, for his putting him so far off.

The Scripture speaks of two kinds of people, who, indeed, are but one: and they seem to look two several ways, whereas, indeed, they look but one and the same way;—viz. those that ‘put the evil day far from them,’ and those that ‘desire the evil day’s coming.’ You have mention of them both near together in one and the same prophet. Of the former, Amos, vi. 3; “Woe to you, that put the evil day far away:”—and of the latter, Amos, v. 18; “Woe to you, that desire the day of the Lord.” How they put away the evil day, in their own foolish fancy and conceit, is no hard thing to understand. I wish, that too common experience had not acquainted us with that too much, and too many a time. But how do such wicked wretches ‘desire the day of the Lord?’ The prophet Isaiah tells you of some, chap. v. 19; “that say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come, that we may know it.” And all this in scorn, as making a puff of the word of the Lord, that tells of an ‘evil day,’ and a ‘day of the Lord,’ to come. Here is talk of the word of the Lord; I pray you let us see it;—and telling of the Lord’s coming; where is it? ‘Let him come,

that we may know it.'—Directly these mockers, 2 Pet. iii. 4, that say in scorn, "Where is the promise of his coming?"

Now is the judge ever the farther off for these men's putting him, and his judgment, far away? Nay, is he not the nearer?—In that place of Isaiah, the wretches that spake so in scorn, are said "to draw iniquity with cords of vanity,—and sin, as it were, with cart-ropes." And if they draw these, do they not draw judgment on too? Judgment is the nearest, when the sinner is securest; and "when men cry Peace, peace,—then sudden destruction cometh upon them^w." But,

First, At whose door doth not the judge stand, hearkening and taking notice of men's behaviour? "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock^x." He knocks, that, if it may be, he may be admitted; but, if he be not, he stands not in vain, but takes notice of what passes in the house, that he may take account of it in his due time. "I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done^y?" "The Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him^z." The judge writes what passes; and, in time, will have a reckoning about it. And so may the counsel of the apostle here be very well construed:—"Grudge not, brethren, one against another:" grumble not, repine not, one against another; for "the judge is at the door," and he takes notice of every thing that passeth; and you must account for it."

It were an excellent lesson for every Christian, to get the hundred and nine-and-thirtieth Psalm not only by heart, but in his heart; and to be convinced, and have a feeling of what is there spoken, concerning God's nearness to every man, in what place and posture soever he is. I need no more proof for that we are speaking of, than only that Psalm. I would every heart would make the use of the doctrine there taught, and make application by his practice.

Secondly; Who can say otherwise, than that the Judge is at the door, and may break in, any moment, by death and judgment? And this needs no other proof, than only to remember the uncertainty of death and judgment. Isaac was of this belief, when he said, "I know not the day of my death^a;" whereas he lived many a fair year after.

^w 1 Thes. v.

^x Rev. iii. 20.

^y Jer. viii. 6.

^z Mal. iii. 16.

^a Gen. xxvii. 2.

And remarkable is that of the apostle, that, when he is speaking of the judgment to come, he states it, as if it were to come even in his time, whereas so many hundreds of years above a thousand are passed since his time; "We shall not all die, but we shall all be changed^b:" and, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout: and then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with him into the clouds^c." Why, blessed apostle, dost thou think the resurrection and general judgment shall come, while thou art alive? Do it, or do it not, I have learned always to think, that 'the Judge always stands before the door.' And I would teach all generations and ages to believe the same: that 'the Judge standeth,' &c.

And, thirdly, who can keep him out, when he is pleased to break in? Elisha could shut the door against the king's messenger, that was sent to take away his life: can any man do it against the great Judge, when he comes to do it? Are any doors judgment-proof, when the Lord will batter against them? Rather, "lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be lift up, O ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in." "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel;" that, when he comes, thou mayest comfortably entertain him. It may seem a very hard passage, that of the apostle^d, "Looking for and hasting to the day of God, when the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved." Any one may be ready to say upon it, as Ahab doth to Ben-hadad, "That which my Lord sent to me for at the first, I will do; but this second thing I cannot do." The first thing proposed, 'To look for the day of God,' I shall willingly agree to; but 'to hasten the day of God,' this is a hard saying. For who, as the Judge standeth before the door, dare invite him in? Who dares say, as Laban to Abraham's servant, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, come in; why standest thou without?" The generality of men think the day of God hasteneth fast enough of itself, and that there is little need to hasten it. And yet, that very consideration is a great persuasive so to do. I am sure it is so argued, Matt. xxv, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go forth to meet him." Not sit still, till he come up to you, for he is coming; but, because 'he is coming, go forth to meet him.'

It was a noble confidence and valour in David, that, when

^b 1 Cor. xv.

^c 1 Thes. iv.

^d 2 Pet. iii. 12.

Goliath came out against him, he ran, and made haste to meet him. And he had but coarsely encountered that great giant, had he not had that confidence and valour. That man or woman will but coldly encounter death and judgment, that sit still, till death and judgment come upon them, and never make out to meet them: that, when the Judge stands at the door, have no mind of his entering and coming in.

It were worth disputing, how far a good man may be willing to die, or how far unwilling; but I shall not enter upon that, at this time. It is past all dispute, that every one should be preparing to die, and to meet the Judge when he cometh. He standeth at the door;—it is happy to be prepared against he cometh in. Let us all leave our thank-offerings at the Judge's altar for his great patience and long-suffering towards us,—that he is still standing at the door, and hath not broken in upon us; that his patience is not out-wearied by us, after our so great exercising of it. And let us ever carry the words of the text sounding in our ears and hearts,—that 'the Judge standeth at the door,' beholding all our actions, beholding all our hearts, noting and observing all we do, to demand an account of us at his day of judgment.

A SERMON^a,

PREACHED AT

ST. MARY'S, CAMBRIDGE,

OCT. 7, 1655.

MATT. XXVIII. 19.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

SEVEN things may be taken notice of from these words, at first sight:—

I. A permission and commission to bring the gospel among the Gentiles. The apostles had been tied up before “Jesus sent forth the twelve, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles^b :” but now he enlarged them.

II. The end of this enlargement, to bring the Gentiles in to be disciples:—so μαθητεύσατε signifies, as we shall see anon.

III. The way to initiate them for disciples: μαθητεύσατε βαπτίζοντες, ‘make them disciples, by baptizing them.’

IV. The form of the administration of baptism: ‘In nomine Patris,’ &c. ‘In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’

V. This is the fourth establishment of baptism. The first was in the hand of John. Secondly, Christ himself was baptized. Thirdly, The disciples baptized in his name^c. Fourthly, Here in the text is the full establishment of it.

VI. The doctrine of the Trinity is in the text, and professed in every baptism.

VII. The office of ministers: to teach and administer the sacraments.

Two heresies especially misconstrue this text, Anabaptism and Socinianism. For I must call that heresy, that unchurches all churches, and ungod God. I shall not entangle myself in these disputes,—only consider the sense and

^a English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1022.

^b Matt. x. 5.

^c John, iii. 22. iv. 2.

propriety of the text, as before us; and that in these parts named.

First, I shall consider the apostles' commission to fetch in the Gentiles. This is called a mystery, Ephes. iii. 4—6, &c; "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which, in other ages, was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel;" &c. This is the great business in the prophets. "To bring thy sons from far:" "All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God," &c. In a word, this is a great monument of the 'riches of grace,' that when the Gentiles had lain rejected so long as two-and-twenty hundred years; so deep, as to commit all sin, and not know of sin; so enslaved, as to adore devils; so far from the means of grace, as that they never heard of it:—yet, not length of time, depth of sin, power of Satan, nor vastness of distance, could hinder the light of the gospel breaking in upon them. O! the height, depth, breadth, and length, of the grace of God!

Here is a large field, to consider this grace. As, first, how the gospel was slighted by the Jews, yet this grace was not worn out of patience, but God sends it also to the Gentiles. And, secondly, how it was brought to them, that cared not to come to it. I might speak here of our share of this grace, who were heathen. It was 'good tidings to all people;' as to the Romans^c, "Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ." But I shall keep close to the words of the text. I shall observe two things concerning this commission.

I. The time, when this commission was given.

II. The work, which the apostles were to do by virtue of this commission:—

First, The time. Christ being now risen. And the reasons, why Christ took this time to deliver this commission to his apostles, were these:—

1. One reason of it appears in the word *therefore*. In the eighteenth verse, "All power is given unto me in heaven, and in earth. Go ye therefore." *All power*, as mediator. He dispensed things before, after his own will, by virtue of

^c Chap. i. 6.

his sovereignty; "Therefore hath he mercy, on whom he will have mercy^d." But add to this, that now he had paid a price for the heathens; he had earned his wife as Jacob; had conquered Satan, that had them captive; had exhibited a righteousness, to save the wickedest, where they would apply it; had broken down the partition-wall between Jew and Gentile. In Ephes. ii. 13, 14; "But now in Christ Jesus ye, who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." And, in ver. 15, he shows you how: "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances," &c. 'In his flesh, he hath abolished the enmity' between both;—First, By dying for both alike. That the Scripture oft inculcates: his 'dying for all,' i. e. Jews and Gentiles.—Secondly, He satisfied what the ordinances of the partition-wall required. Take sacrifices, purifications for the partition-wall: he satisfied them. Take, 'touch not, taste not, handle not,' for the partition-wall: he exhibited a purity that nothing could taint. Thus, 'all power was given him,' and such a claim to the heathen. And therefore Christ, now after his resurrection, sends his apostles to all nations.

2. Another reason was this, because the Jews had now forfeited their privilege. "Beauty and bonds" were broke. They were set under a peculiar favour at first (Christ owns that), till they forfeited it, by despising their highest privilege of all,—viz. Christ himself born of them, and his gospel. This is plain, by those words of Barnabas and Paul^e; "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." And Christ had said to them before, "The kingdom of heaven shall be taken from you." They had sinned worse than the heathen; the prophets blame them so. For besides the contempt of means, which the heathen had not,—they out-went them in that very sin, that cast the heathen off. The Gentiles had refused the "invisible creator^f," but they had but small light. These had rejected 'God visible, and that for a murderer,—when the light shone as clear as possible: I say, as plainly as possibly

^d Rom. ix. 18.^e Acts, xiii. 46.^f 1 Rom. xxv.

God could converse with men, and show himself,—viz. in infinite goodness and holiness. They looked for power and glory; he showed that in his miracles:—but that is not the highest way of God's showing himself; the devils can show power;—but 'he went about doing good,' and showing holiness,—the greatest evidence and footsteps of God; and yet they rejected him.

This makes me not believe the call of the Jews; because they sinned beyond the Gentiles; because they sinned against such light, as shall never appear to eyes again. Some have dreamed of some glorious appearance of Christ, that shall convert them: if more shall be seen, than they have seen already, I believe it. But more certainly they cannot see.

So that the apostles now are sent 'duplici jure:' Christ had made good his claim to the Gentiles, and the Jews had lost their privilege. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations."

Secondly, The apostles' work enjoined them by Christ. Here are three actions of the apostles mentioned:—Go,—teach,—baptize.

I might speak to the first, πορευθέντες, go. And here I might observe those prophecies, Deut. xxxiii. 18, 19; "And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and Issachar, in thy tents. They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand."—And, in Isa. lxvi. 19; "And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them, unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles." I might observe the apostles' pains and dangers, among wolves, dogs, lions; their liberty to go among the Gentiles, which was not allowed them before by Christ's prohibition, and his own custom. In Acts x. 28; "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew, to keep company, or come unto one of another nation." How odious among the Jews, was conversation with Gentiles! They were dust,—defiled,—Samaritans,—filth. And, therefore, it was not lawful for Jews to go among them: but now they had liberty to do it. I might speak of the πάντα, 'all nations,'—whether all countries in the world be meant here?

But it is the apostles' work, that I am to consider in those words, μαθητεύσατε βαπτίζοντες, 'teach' them, 'baptizing' them;—for I will take them together. You know, what is hence collected,—viz. that men must be first *taught*, before they are to be *baptized*. But the word is not of that strict propriety; it means not so far as 'teaching;' that is in verse the twentieth, "teaching them to observe all things," &c: but μαθητεύσατε is, "bring them in to learn, to be disciples, scholars." Scholars easily see the sense. Men were made disciples, not when already taught,—but, 'ut doceantur,' 'that they might be taught.'—Philip and Nathanael were disciples, as soon as they cleaved to Christ, and were taught afterward. "Will you be his disciples?" That is, 'Will you follow him, betake you to his school?' ח'ת is not always one learned, but that gives himself to it, contrary to עם הארץ. The apostles understand the word 'discipling' in the tenor of the nation; and they took the word, as if Christ should have said to them, "Fetch in all nations, to be scholars to the gospel, and profession of Christ." But they do ὕστερον πρότερον, that say, 'We must go to Christ's school, that we may be baptized:—it is contrary, baptism makes disciples, and discipling sets in the way to be taught.

And hence I lay down this doctrine,—*That baptism is God's appointed way to introduce into Christ's school.*

"Make disciples."—How? βαπτίζοντες, "baptizing them."—As circumcision was the way to Israelitism, so baptism is the way to Christianity. We are upon a subject, that seems heterogeneous to this audience; for no baptisms are here. Yet hardly is there a subject fitter, upon better consideration; since here are so many candidates for the ministry, to which this belongs. There are great divisions about the sacraments; and I know not what lesson candidates may better apply themselves to for the peace of the church, than to study well the nature of the sacraments.

In prosecution of this doctrine, I might allege places of Scripture that urge this; as, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ^s." "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized^h?" But that I may not manage this subject at random, I observe these things gradually:—

^s Acts, ii. 38.

^h Chap. viii. 36, &c.

I. That Scripture doth hold out a clear distinction betwixt them that profess Christ, and them that do not. I say, *profess*, as to outward profession. And we must learn Scripture sense and language in this case, and not be our own dictionary. When Ephraim speaks finer than Gilead, it spoils all: so when we speak finer than Scripture, and make words narrower in their sense, than the Scripture does, we spoil the true meaning. Sometime this distinction is taught by phrases, that speak both parties,—viz. them that profess, and them that do not: and sometimes by a single word, that speaks them that profess only. I will mention these few:—

1. 1 Cor. vii. 12, 13; “But to the rest speak I, not the Lord; If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath a husband which believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.” *Brother*, in opposition to *unbeliever*:—the apostle here starts the point of Christians married with infidels, whether they should divorce because of religion; and what rank their children were in? “To the rest speak I, not the Lord.” He spake not without the Lord; but he means, that there was not a text for this case in the law. See ver. 10: “And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband.” And see chap. ix. 8; “Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? *If any brother*, i. e. Christian.—See 1 Cor. v. 11; “If any man, that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous,” &c; where by ‘brother’ is plainly meant a ‘Christian;’ ‘A wife that believeth not,’—viz. ‘a Pagan;’ and so along.—The same case is handled, 2 Cor. vi. 15; “What concord hath Christ with Belial? and what part hath he that believeth, with an infidel?” There ‘believer’ and ‘infidel’ are opposed. ‘Believer’ here is as large as ‘professor,’ in opposition to ‘Jew’ or ‘Pagan.’

2. Those phrases ‘within’ and ‘without.’ 1 Cor. v. 12; “What have I to do to judge them that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?”—It is a Jewish phrase, and they straiten the sense, that take ‘those that are without’ to be meant of ‘Christians.’

In one word, sometime ‘believer’ alone, the opposite not named: Acts ii. 44; “And all that *believed*, were together, and had all things common.” And here, whole families,

children, and all, are understood:—sometimes, disciples and Christians: Acts xi. 26; “The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.”

In this sense, ‘church’ most commonly is taken,—viz. for the ‘professors’ of Christ, in opposition to Jews and Pagans, that professed him not. “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church^a ;” which is meant of the church of the Gentiles, in general. So^b, “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the *church* the manifold wisdom of God.” So, by the saints, are meant nothing else but professors of Christian religion. “Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know, that the saints shall judge the world^c?” And^d, “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were their children unclean; but now are they holy.” Now are they saints; answering to the usual Hebrew phrase בקדושה, ‘In sanctitate.’

Here is a study for a young divine, to be settled in the sense of these words. There are great divisions, and great misconstruction of one another, from mistake of these things.

II. That God hath appointed sacraments, as external and visible marks, whereby to sign out this distinction. Badges of homage; as in the text, “Disciple all nations, baptizing them.” So, under the law, circumcision served for that end, to be a mark of a Jew; and, therefore, the heathen are called ‘uncircumcised;’ and, when some of the circumcised seed degenerated, that they wanted that mark to distinguish them, then God ordained the Passover. So, under the gospel, baptism is the mark, as in the text. Children are baptized, that there may be none in our families, that bear not the badge of homage. Christ ordained it for this end, to badge out the owning of his power, and to introduce into the profession of him: “For, as many of you, as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ^e.”

See John, iii. 5: “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Speech is there had of Christ’s kingdom of heaven upon earth, or the state

^a Matt. xvi. 18.

^b Eph. iii. 10.

^c 1 Cor. vi. 1, 2.

^d 1 Cor. vii. 14.

^e Gal. iii. 27.

under Christ. See ver. 2, 3: Nicodemus “came to Jesus by night, and said unto him,—Rabbi, we know thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Where mark, how Christ’s answer suits:—he observed in Nicodemus’s words, signifying that he thought he saw the dawning of the kingdom of heaven; and now it was, that the Jews thought it would come upon them; and this farther confirmed him, that Christ was the Messiah. To this, therefore, Christ answers, and intimates to Nicodemus to be baptized.

Why would Christ himself be baptized? Because he would own the proper way of introduction into the gospel, which he was now to preach.

So the Lord’s supper is a badge of this distinction; see 1 Cor. x. 14. 16: “Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. The cup of blessing which we bless,—is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break,—is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” As much as if he should have said, ‘Because we have the sacrament of the communion of the body and blood of Christ, therefore avoid idolatry.’ It is the badge of those, that profess Christ in opposition to heathenism.

I might speak how the word ‘sacrament’ speaks such distinction, but that is well enough known.

III. As baptism hath several co-ordinate ends, so all, or most of them, are suitable to that that we are speaking of,—viz. introducing into the profession of Christ. Both sacraments have several ends; therefore, it is proper in the dispute now about them, to consider, whether it is fit to apply them to one only end.

1. Baptism hath a doctrinal end. It is a visible word, “Loquitur Deus, ut videas.” As it is a visible sign, so a visible doctrine. As God speaks in Jeremiah^f, “O generation, see ye the word of the Lord.” The Lord, to come home to our capacity, brings divine things to our eyes: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon^g.” Thus, baptism, when we see it administered, reads the doc-

^f Chap. ii. 31.

^g 1 John, i. 1.

trine of our natural defilement and purging from it: Ezek. xxxvi. 25, is so understood; "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." So circumcision, in the member of generation, showed a check to our natural generation, and that God would circumcise.

So was the primitive institution of baptism. As it was used originally to admit proselytes, so it is used in the gospel to admit all nations: it was used then to denote washing from moral and legal pollution; now, under the gospel, to denote washing from natural, and is of this everlasting use.—As washing in the temple was a needful introduction into it,—so Christ ordained this, that, at our entrance into his religion, we might read our natural defilements, and our cleansing from them. Baptism is the epitome of what comes to us from both Adams,—pollution from the first, and purifying from the second.

These great doctrines are read in these 'primis elementis,' 'first elements;' the sum whereof is, that, if we intend to come into the kingdom of Christ, we must be purified.

2. As it reads doctrines to us, so it seals the truth of the promises. It is a seal of the covenant; it is a seal to a deed. We put our seal two ways, by believing and obeying: God puts his three,—viz. by his oath^h,—by the blood of his Son,—and by the sacraments. These sacraments are everlasting visible seals; and hence appears the reason of their continuance. Circumcision is a sealⁱ; "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith." How was it a 'seal of the righteousness of the faith?' Not to seal Abraham's righteousness, but God's truth; and, therefore, it is called his covenant:—it sealed that righteousness, that is by faith. So baptism is a seal, likewise, in the nature of circumcision. Observe, how circumcision and the Passover answer to baptism and the Lord's supper:—

Circumcision	} seals of the righte-	Baptism	} of the life
Passover		ousness by faith:	

Now, this seal being imprinted upon all, in their admission to the church, it is as much as if God should have said, 'You coming into the administration of the covenant, here is my mark, that I will perform all I promise.'

^h Heb. vi. 17.

ⁱ Rom. iv. 11.

3. There is an obligatory end of it, to engage them, that are baptized, on their part; as a covenant is of mutual obligation, and so are seals. As by circumcision, a Jew was made debtor to the law^j, “I testify to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to the whole law;” so baptism makes him, that receives it, debtor to the gospel. See the text for this, and ver. 20; “Teaching them to observe all things, that I have commanded you.” It brings into the bond of the covenant; a man now becomes בן ברית ‘a son of the covenant.’

Now, the equity of this obligation lies in two things:—first, In Christ’s institution; it is equal that he lay obligation on all, that come to serve him: and, secondly, In the equity of the things themselves, that are required.

4. There is a privilegial end of baptism. It brings into the number of the owned people;—it badged out some to escape the wrath to come; “When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come^k?” God makes a plain difference betwixt the church and Pagans. There are promises, providences, to this,—which belong not to them. Now, this rite gives admission into that society. It makes disciples,—so the text speaks. By this they are admitted into the ‘atrium’ of the temple, into the ‘court’ of the church, and stand no longer without among the strangers; as the Shechemites, by circumcision, came into Jacob’s family, and came under his promises and providences. Baptism brings the baptized person into the condition of Ruth^l,—puts us under the wings of the Almighty.

Having spoken something to the apostles’ commission and work, and particularly from μαθητεύσατε βαπτίζοντες, “Disciple all nations, baptizing them,” observed how baptism introduces into the school of Christ, and, upon this, considered the nature of baptism,—viz. that it is doctrinal, sigillative, obligatory, privilegial; I shall now make some application on that, and then proceed to the form prescribed to be used in baptism, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son,” &c.

Look back, then, in your thoughts, upon the ends named, and observe hence:—

^j Gal. v. 3.

^k Matt. iii. 7.

^l Ruth, ii. 12.

I. The durableness of the sacraments, because these ends are durable. Things of divine institution are as durable as their ends. Both sacraments, now-a-days, are at indifference; nay, some assert them needless. As God complained of old, that men made his law a “common thing;” so he may now take up the same complaint of his sacraments. And, the reason is, because men know not the nature of them. But they rose with the gospel; and they must live with it, because of such affinity betwixt them. They hold forth the same doctrines with the gospel, and they are seals of the same promises. As circumcision and the Passover dured that economy,—so these sacraments, baptism and the Lord’s supper, must endure as long as the economy of the gospel; and, unless there be no gospel, or a new gospel, they must continue; “This cup is the New Testament in my blood^m.” The New Testament in Christ’s blood must last with the New Testament.

And observe, God would not lay by circumcision and the Passover, without other rites were brought-in in their stead, and one in the place of the other; baptism in the place of circumcision,—the Lord’s supper in the place of the Passover. Let Anabaptists cavil and contend against this assertion as much as they will, it is yet most true. Christ laid down those, and took up these; and so one takes, beginning at the end of the other, as the two Testaments do; and both, like cherubs’ wings, reach from one side of the house of God to the other, and meet in the middle. Joshua’s pillars in the water of Jordan, and at Gilgal, where the children of Israel ate the Passover, must endure,—because the ends, wherefore they were set up, were to endure;—fourth and fifth chapters of Joshua. And so must the two sacraments, these monuments, endure also, because their ends endure,—viz. To seal God’s truth, and our homage.—Learn, O ye candidates for the ministry, the perpetuity of sacraments: they are not for a moment,—they are not arbitrary.

It is sad to see, what authority men take over the sacraments. Some congregations have had none these fourteen years; and, what think these men of the sacraments? What light businesses indeed are they, if men may thus dispose of them? I wish God avenge not the quarrel of the seals of the covenant. And, as he punished the Jews for suffering his

^m 1 Cor. xi. 25.

temple to lie wasteⁿ,—so we may fear his punishments may light upon us, for suffering his sacraments to lie waste.

II. Hence we infer the lawfulness of admitting infants to baptism. Look back to the three things last spoken of concerning the sacraments, that they are seals, obligations, and privileges:—and, upon every one of these, children are capable of the sacrament of baptism.

First; Why is it not lawful to imprint a seal of God's truth upon babes? Memorials of God's truth and faithfulness have been imprinted upon lifeless and insensible things. Thus the "bow in the cloud was set up for a token of a covenant between God and the earth^o." And Joshua wrote God's law on the stones of the altar^p. It was imprinted on children by God's appointment, in circumcision: why not now? Why do we seclude children from that honour now? Why incapable now?

Mistake not, in thinking that sacraments seal his righteousness, or interest in God, that receives them: no, they seal God's truth, whosoever receive them. Simon Magus received baptism, and Judas the Lord's supper: they were seals of God's truth, though not to their profit. Peter, Paul, received them for advantage. How? As seals? Yes; but not sealing their righteousness, but as seals of God's truth, and so they confirmed their faith. It is ignorance, and a blind cavil, to assert the sacraments seals of his righteousness that partakes of them, and therefore that infants are not to be baptized.

Secondly; Infants are capable of an obligation. A man may bind his heir, though an infant. So infants were bound by circumcision. Why not now? Nay, see Deut. xxix. 11. 15: "You stand this day all of you before the Lord; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, &c. that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, &c. Neither with you only do I make this covenant, and this oath; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day." Where you see, that those that were unborn and distant, when Moses made this covenant, were bound to this covenant: and children are no farther off than these.

ⁿ Hag. i. 9.

^o Gen. ix. 13.

^p Josh. viii. 32.

For the equity of the obligation lies not in the parties' understanding the thing, but 'in æquitate rei,' 'in the equity of the thing' itself. How come all men liable to Adam's sin? 'æquitas imputationis,' the 'equity of imputing' it to them makes them liable, as they are in Adam's loins and covenant. How do men become bound to perform their duty? Not because able, but 'ex æquitate rei,' because it is so equal and fit that they should. So children, at baptism, may come under obligation, not because they are able to perform their duty to know it, but the equity of the thing lays it on. They have this natural bond upon them as creatures, to homage God; if the sacramental bond be added, they are bound, as Christians, to homage Christ. Why should this be so monstrous, since they are as much capable to know one as the other?

I may add, they are part of their parents, and, therefore, to be brought under the same bond. So I would answer an Anabaptist; 'I baptize my child, because I am baptized myself.'—'A strange reason,'—will he say. Let him give me the reason of those two passages, Gen. xvii. 14; "And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." And, Exod. xx. 5; "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children." Alas! what hath the poor child done? Why doth God visit the iniquity of the father upon the child? He is part of his parent; and, in the punishment of the child, the parent is punished. Here, then, is the reason, why parents ought to bring their children to baptism; because they themselves are not whole under this bond and introduction, if part of them,—viz. their children, be out of it. This is the reason of baptizing whole families, Acts xvi. 15. 34, &c. where you may see, how they were first disciplined by baptism in a minute after hearing of Christ, and also how the whole family was baptized with the parent. It is childish to say, 'It may be, there were no children in those families,' and shows their ignorance that plead it:—for, if never so many children, they must be baptized. For so was the custom of the Jewish nation in their use of baptism, when a proselyte came in, his children were baptized with him: and all this upon this ground, that all that were related to the parent, might come into covenant. But were succeeding

generations of proselytes' children baptized? I answer,—‘No; but only the first generation was baptized.’ Why then are we baptized after the conversion of our nation? I answer, ‘They had the sacrament of admission, circumcision, for true Israelites, and that continued from generation to generation; and baptism, being of the same nature and use, requires the same continued practice.’

Thirdly; Baptism is for privilegial ends. And a child is capable of privilege. A child in the cradle may be made a king. Children were capable of circumcision, that was a privilege to be admitted into the Jewish church; why are they not capable of the like privilege now? The Babylonian Talmud^a disputes this case, and so resolves, “That one may be privileged, though he know it not.” As one at a distance may be chosen fellow of a college. Why is not a child capable of receiving a badge of the privilege of being under the covenant with his parents?

Object. But these privileges come by birth of Christian parents.

Answ. No; not any privilege farther than baptism. Birth-right entitles to that, and that admits to the rest of the privileges. He that was uncircumcised, was cut off, though of circumcised parentage, Gen. xvii. 14. This argument the apostle handles, 1 Cor. vii. 14. So that children are not only capable of baptism as a privilege, but bound to baptism as an introduction to privileges, and cut off without it; as it was in circumcision.

We conclude with that remarkable passage, Matt. xix. 14, “But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Who brought these children? Not unbelievers: such to be sure would not: they must, therefore, have been such as believed on him. But what did believers bring them for? Not to heal; for, if it were for that end, why should the disciples hinder them, “rebuking those that brought them?” ver. 13. Christ’s answer to the disciples shows, that they brought them as children of disciples, and that Christ would own them as his disciples,—which he, by his words concerning them, professeth them capable to be. And the disciples rebuked those that brought them, not that they were ignorant, that children were introduced into the gospel-bond and profes-

^a In Jebamoth, cap. 4.

sion with their parents; but they thought this too much, that they should desire so particular admission by Christ.

It is observable, that baptism, in the first times, was the badge of preservation from destruction. See Matt. iii. 7. When "John saw Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said, Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" By receiving baptism, they fled from God's wrath that was coming upon the Jewish nation. So, 1 Pet. iii. 21, "The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth now save us." As the ark saved Noah and his family from perishing in the general deluge,—so baptism, the figure of that, saved those that received it, from the destruction that was then coming. Would men look upon baptism under this notion, as it is a badge of preservation,—they would not need much persuading to baptize their children.

And thus I have considered the disciples' commission and work, "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them." I now come to the form of baptism, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

It is not unprofitable to observe, how the Holy Ghost, at the story of great actions, doth oft intimate the Trinity. 'Let *us* make man.'—'Let *us* confound their language.' And, at Gen. xviii, you read of three men, that stood by Abraham, who are called afterward Jehovah. And, at the settling of the service of the tabernacle^s, the form of blessing that was prescribed to the priests to use, intimated a Trinity: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee:—The Lord make his face shine upon thee:—The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee." But to spare more instances, at Christ's entry into the ministry, the Trinity is at his baptism; and now, at the end of it, he proclaims it, and enjoins it to be professed at every baptism.

Christ giveth no rules for the manner of baptism, but only this; for that needed not, it being known before. The Anabaptist pleads, that 'there is no precept for infant-baptism.' I say, it needed not; and Christ took up baptism as he found it. If a law be made in these words, 'Let all the university come to St. Mary's on the sabbath;' it would be madness hereafter to say, 'That there ought to be no sermons there, because there is no mention of them in the law:' that is supposed in the law as a thing common and known. So

^s Num. vi. ad fin.

Christ makes this law, That all nations should be baptized; he directs not in this law how to baptize, nor who to be baptized, because that was so well known to all already. And, you may observe, that the Jews never wonder at John's baptism, as to the thing, but all run to him to be baptized, Matt. iii. 5; "There went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan; and were baptized of him." And John is questioned only what authority he had to baptize; whether it was from heaven or of men. They would have said, his baptism had been from the devil, if it had been of the nature of a monster, never seen before. No, baptism was well enough known to the Jews; and both John and Jesus Christ took it up, as they found it. And the form was the only new rule, that he gave for the ministration of it: and that he did, because it was necessary in the alteration of the economy, into which baptism was an introduction.

There were three forms of baptism, as used for introduction:—

First, The baptism of proselytes, under the Old Testament; these were baptized into the profession of the Father: not 'verbatim,' so said,—but 'reipsa,' it was so. I shall not dispute, how far holy men then acknowledged the Trinity. But under the second temple, when that doctrine was more obscure, their common appellation of God, was 'Father.'

Secondly, Baptism in the gospel was, at first, in the name of the Son only, though not under this title. And this was doubly done by John and by the apostles.

1. John baptized in the name of the Messiah now coming; "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, That they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus^t." John baptized half a year before he knew the person of the Messiah; "I knew him not^u." So those, baptized by him, knew not Jesus, yet were baptized into the Messiah. Hence that, Acts xviii. 25, "Apollos spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John." And such were those, Acts xix. 2, that were baptized into John's baptism, but knew not, "whether there were any Holy Ghost." They, by their baptism, took the badge of owning the Messiah, but knew not his person. Thus John baptized into the name of the Messiah.

^t Acts, xix. 4.

^u John, i. 31.

2. The apostles baptized into the name of Jesus, as true Messias. That, in John iii. 22, is so to be understood; "After these things Jesus came and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized." By the way, we may take notice of two things:—

First, That Christ bids his apostles here go to the Gentiles, yet they went not of divers years; "They that were scattered abroad upon the persecution, that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none, but unto the Jews only^v." And Peter preached not to any else, till he had the vision^w. The reason of which, may be fetched from Acts i. 8; "Ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." By which words, Christ commands them first to preach all Judea through, before they preached to 'the uttermost part of the earth.'

Secondly, That Christ bids them baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" yet they did baptize all the while they were in Judea, in the name of Jesus only: "Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ^x." "They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus^y." "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus^z." Now, the reason of this was, to seal Jesus for the Messias and true God. The controversy was, whether Jesus was the Messias: hence, Jesus Christ is so oft joined together; not so much to show Christ a Saviour, as to assert Jesus to be Christ. And for this end, baptism among them was in the name of Jesus. And hence the apostles' benediction, "Grace and peace from God, and Jesus Christ," in their Epistles.

Where is the Holy Ghost? says Socinus. Not excluded, though not nominated. If satisfaction be given concerning Jesus, that he is the Messias, satisfaction is easy about his Spirit. The Jews acknowledged the Spirit of Messias of a divine nature and acting, even to be the Spirit of God that wrought the creation. So Zohar, on Gen. i. 2.—Now, therefore, that being the thing to be settled, that Jesus was the Messias, and Son of God,—the apostle applies himself to that in the benediction, and the other would follow of itself,

^v Acts, xi. 19.

^w Acts, x.

^x Acts, ii. 38.

^y Chap. viii. 16.

^z Chap. xix. 5.

—viz. a blessing from the Spirit of Messias, which is the Spirit of God. Let us observe these things gradually, or in order:—

I. That whereas the Jews expected Messias, in his personal and pompous presence, he resolves them, that his presence is by his Spirit; and his victory by his Spirit. See that, John xvi. 7; “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; It is expedient, that I go away from you: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” He speaks there, in reference to the Jews’ opinion, that called Messias, ‘Menahem,’ ‘Comforter:’ and looked for earthly comforts from him. “No (saith he); it is expedient for me to go away, and my Spirit shall supply comforts unto you.” To that purpose, is that, John xx. 17, “Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father.” Gregory Nyssen, for ‘adveniat regnum tuum,’ speaks of Luke’s having it, ‘Adveniat Spiritus Sanctus tuus:’ instead of “Thy kingdom come,” “let thy Holy Spirit come.” The thing is true, though the authority questionable.

II. For the justifying and evidencing this, that his presence is by his Spirit, and so his rule,—he sent his Spirit in powerful demonstrations (as you read in the Acts of the Apostles), that, by the sight of his Spirit, men might come to own him. Observe that passage, John xiv. 12; “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.” ‘You, my disciples, shall do greater things than I do:’—why so? For the magnifying of the Spirit. Hence that, in Mark iii. 28, 29; He that should speak against the Son, should be pardoned; but not he, that should speak against the Holy Ghost: “He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness;” because the Son appeared in meanness, and his personal presence was not to be insisted on; but the Holy Ghost came in all-powerful and convincing demonstration. Hence, Ananias and Sapphira were so severely punished, because their sin was against the Holy Ghost: “Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost^a?”

III. The Spirit did, by these demonstrations of power, assert the Deity and authority of Christ,—and his own, as sent by him, and to be his Spirit:—“And when he (the Spi-

^a Acts, v. 3.

rit) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged^b." And, by that very thing, is showed Christ's rule and work in his church, by his Spirit.

IV. That, as the Spirit, by these demonstrations, was to assert Jesus,—so the apostles, at that time, baptized only in the name of Jesus:—and, accordingly, the gift of the Spirit was given at baptism. See Acts xix. 2; "He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost, since ye believed?" signifying, that the receiving of the Holy Ghost followed upon baptism. As the Spirit of God, that is, the Holy Ghost, rested on Christ at his baptism,—so the Spirit of Christ, that is, the Holy Ghost, rested on his at their baptism. Not on all.—Why?—Because he was come for that end, to enable the disciples to teach and preach, and to assert Jesus.

V. When the doctrine of Jesus and his Spirit were thus manifested, then it was ripe to baptize in the "name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Each person had demonstratively approved his Godhead. The Father under the Old Testament. Hence is the tenor of Christ's speech, John v. 19, 20; "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doth, these also doth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel."—The Son hath demonstrated his Godhead, by his conversation among us^c; "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father:" and, by his resurrection; "Declared to be the Son of God, with power, by the resurrection from the dead^d." And, lastly, by pouring down of his Spirit, when he was ascended. The Holy Ghost demonstrated his Godhead, by his powerful actings.

VI. Turn your minds back to Babel^e; there the heathen lost the knowledge of the true God^f, "because, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened; and changed the glory of the uncor-

^b John, xvi. 8—10. ^c John, i. 14. ^d Rom. i. 4. ^e Gen. xi. ^f Rom. i. 21, &c.

ruptible God into an image, made like to corruptible man," &c. Thenceforward consider, what was done in that peculiar people, whom God had chosen, for revealing the true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And when all those revealings were full, then it was ripe to bring that manifestation of God among the heathen, "Go, and teach all nations, baptizing them," &c. It is as much as if Christ should have said to his apostles, "The heathens have lost the knowledge of the true God: now bring that knowledge among them again, and baptize them in the name of the true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." As baptism was in the name of Jesus, among the Jews, where the question was about the true Messias,—so, among the Gentiles, where the question was about the true God, baptism was in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Lay Rom. i. 25, to this text: "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." The casting off the Gentiles was, because they worshipped the creature. What was their recovery in the text? Was it to bring the worship of the creature among them again, as the Arian and Socinian gloss? No; but to bring the knowledge and worship of the Creator among them, of the true God; and that was Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

I shall not go about to confute those cursed opinions; the Lord rebuke them: I shall only observe these things upon them:—

First, That as they blaspheme the greatest, so the plainest truths, in the Bible. I cannot but wonder at the denial of the Godhead of Christ: and though the Godhead of the Holy Ghost is not in so plain terms, yet it is in as plain evidences as can be.

Secondly, That they go clean cross to the stream of Scripture. The main purpose of that, is to extol Christ and the Holy Ghost;—the main purpose of these, to abase them.

Thirdly, Grant them what they would have,—they set themselves farther from heaven and hope, when the Redeemer and Sanctifier are but creatures.

Fourthly, Observe here the spirit of old antichrist, and how it hath descended.

First, The Jews began and blasphemed Christ; "Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He

is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son^g." And that then was the Jew.

Secondly, When they were destroyed, then Rome began to persecute, till Constantine.

Thirdly, When that was quieted, then the Arian and the Macedonian appeared in the Jewish spirit.

Fourthly, That cursed spirit was hardly laid; but then the Papacy begins to rise, and brings-in all Judaism against the honour of Christ.

And, fifthly, That unmasked in the Reformation, the Jewish spirit appears again in the Socinian.

g 1 John, ii. 22.

A SERMON^a,

PREACHED

AT ASPEDEN,

APRIL 5, 1660.

1 COR. x. 2.

And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

ONE great breach in England is the breach about the sacraments. It is the policy of the devil to divide Christians even there, where there is the greatest bond of communion: as poison is to our victuals, which makes that, which, in its own nature, is the great means of the preservation of our health and lives,—to become the destroyer of it. Our knitting together must be in these sacraments, but they are made the means of our disuniting:—therefore, if the present occasion called not for it, yet the present necessity of our nation does, to inform ourselves about these bonds.

For your instruction in the sacrament, or bond of baptism, I have chosen these words: wherein we may observe these four things:—I. Israel was baptized. II. All were baptized. III. Unto Moses. IV. In the cloud and in the sea.

I. Israel was baptized, when they came out of Egypt. From whence I make this doctrine:

That baptism was no new thing, when Christ ordained it in the church of the gospel.

This observation is of excellent use. It is said concerning the times of the gospel, that there should be “new heavens, and a new earth.” All new. When God set aside that old people, he chose him a new people,—viz. The Gentiles. This change of new for old, consisted in two things:—first, Some things were laid aside; and, secondly, some old things were reserved, but the end of them changed. All the ceremonial law laid aside, but the moral reserved, and the doctrine cleared. The public worship of the temple laid aside,

^a English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1132.

—of the synagogue, reserved. But some old things were reserved, and changed. At the Passover, the lamb was laid aside, bread and wine reserved, but the end changed. And in this sacrament, where baptism was added to circumcision; circumcision was laid aside, baptism reserved.

The first mention of baptism is in Gen. xxxv. 2: “And Jacob said unto his household, and unto all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments.” Be clean, the word is *הטהרו* ‘Mundate vos.’ That baptism is meant here, is confessed by the Jews.

The next mention is this in the text: “They were all baptized unto Moses,” &c. And this is the more considerable, that they should be baptized now, when they were but newly circumcised; to wit, in the three days’ darkness that was upon the Egyptians, during which time Israel was circumcised to qualify them to eat the Passover: for “no uncircumcised person may eat thereof.”

A third mention of baptism is at Sinai,—so the Jews; and they speak of proselytes’ admission now.

The Anabaptists will not hear this,—nothing but the letter of Scripture. But that is a dangerous tenet. It is true, we are to require it for the foundation of faith; but, by insisting upon it too rigorously for other matters, we lose infinite profit, that may accrue to us by examples and explanations.

But let us reason with them, that baptism could be no new thing in those times. First, The scribes and Pharisees were not so easy to be brought to follow novelty:—but they came in multitudes to John’s baptism^c. Secondly, The Jews sent Pharisees to John the Baptist, “and they asked him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ^d?” Whereby you may see, they never questioned the thing; and showed, also, that they were easily persuaded, that the Messiah would make use of their rite of baptizing for the admitting disciples.

Take this in the dispute about pædobaptism. They tell us, that there is no example in the Scripture of children baptized.—I answer, True; but no such example needed to be recorded; for, Christ took up baptism, as he found it in the Jewish church, and they baptized infants as well as grown

^b Exod. xii. 48.

^c Matt. iii. 7.

^d John, i. 25.

persons. And, if Christ would not, that baptism should have been administered to children, he would have forbidden it. Therefore, there is no rule or example given in Scripture of baptizing children. Luke wrote enough in Acts xvi. 15. 34, where he tells us of the baptism of Lydia and her *household*, and of the jailor and *all his*.—Now, one reading these passages in Judea, how would he have understood it? Undoubtedly, according to the ordinary practice of baptism, as it was used among them in admitting of their proselytes; which was, that when the master of the house was baptized for a proselyte, all his family, children and all, were baptized too. It is the best rule to come to the understanding of the phrases of Scripture, to consider, in what sense they were taken in that country, and among that people, where they were written.

II. “They were all baptized.” Who? “*All our fathers*,” ver. 1, “*All passed through the sea*.”—Were there not children here? How? Was there no child in arms? Did they carry none on their backs, when they passed through the sea? What say the Anabaptists here? This text saith *all* were baptized. They say, None ought to be baptized that are children, because they are not capable of understanding the ordinance. What then? Were the Jewish children more capable than the children of Christians?

There are two opinions of the Anabaptists, which we are to be informed in, else we may fall into mistake:—

First, That baptism is not to be administered to any, that are without knowledge.

Secondly, That it is not to be administered to any, unless he be ‘*verus filius foederis*,’ ‘a true son of the covenant.’ To these I will put answer into your mouths.

To the first,—God never ordained sacraments, that their nature should be changed ‘*pro captu recipientis*,’ according to the capacity of him, that received them.’ Ordinances retain their nature, whosoever receives them. As sin is sin, though not felt,—and the word is the word of God, though he that hears it, is not benefited by it;—so sacraments are sacraments, as to their nature, whatsoever the receivers be. It is true, their *fruit* is ‘*pro captu recipientis*,’ but not their *nature*. The sacrament is a seal, whosoever receives it.

Again; You read of baptism without knowledge, in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; “Go, and *disciple* all nations, baptizing

them in the name, &c. Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you," &c. 'Baptize and teach.' True, indeed, the adults that were baptized, confessed their sins; but this restrains not baptism to them alone, because there are several ends of it applicable to those, that know not; especially that in the next particular.

As to the second, That baptism belongs to none but such, as are in the covenant, and that it is 'a seal of our righteousness.'—This phrase is fetched from Rom. iv. 11; "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith." Which place is expounded to mean 'a seal of the person's righteousness,' that receives it. But to examine this place.

1. It is said to be a sign; now, a sign is to help unbelief, and to confirm doctrine. Exod. iv; Moses's miracles, there mentioned, were to be signs, to make the Israelites believe his message. 1 Cor. xiv. 22; "Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." And to that purpose is that of our Saviour, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."

2. The doctrines, there delivered, are well worth such a confirmation;—namely, first, 'That a sinner, upon his believing in Christ, becomes righteous:' this is the greatest truth. Secondly, 'That he becomes righteous by another;' this was a wonder to the Jews. Thirdly, 'That it is by a better righteousness than Adam's.' Fourthly, 'That it is by a righteousness infinite,—viz. a righteousness that outvies condemning righteousness, and that very same righteousness, that God gives to Christ.'

So that the meaning of those words, 'the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith,' is, that it was a seal to confirm that great doctrine. So sacraments are to seal the truth of God. He hath put-to his seal in the sacrament, as a seal to a deed confirms the truth of it. So that circumcision is a seal of the same truth to Esau, Judas, &c; else it loses its nature, which is to confirm God's truth; and so the sacraments are seals of God's truth. Baptism seals that truth, that 'washing by the blood of Christ, cleanseth us from our sins:' so that, though children know not what baptism means, yet it hath this nature.

III. "They were all baptized unto Moses," i. e. unto his discipline. They were circumcised unto God,—viz. unto

true religion. Now, they are ‘baptized into Moses,’—that is, into his way. Baptism is to enter us into the true profession; “Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost^e;—that is, into the profession of the true God. So, ‘in the name of Jesus,’—that is, into his belief and religion.

Hence, also, infants are capable of baptism, as it is a distinctive badge, that marks us out for Christians; and, therefore, we are said to be “all baptized into one body^f.” So the children of Israel were circumcised, though they were born Israelites, that they might be marked for God’s people.

As to the fourth observable in the text, “baptized in the cloud and in the sea,” I cannot now insist on that.

The conclusion is, that we retain this sacrament without doubting. It carries its warrant in its institution, and in its own nature. I will leave two directions with you:—

I. Rest not in a negative religion only.

II. Let the practice of the church have authority with you.

^e Matt. xxviii. 19.

^f 1 Cor. xii. 13.

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT

ST. MARY'S, CAMBRIDGE,

FEBRUARY 24, 1655-6.

LUKE, XI. 2.

When ye pray, say, Our Father, which art in heaven.

THE words are our Saviour's. And they are a sweet condescension to a pious request, in the verse before; where Christ, praying publicly, as it seems, among his disciples, one affected with it, prays, "Lord, teach us to pray." Where was this disciple at the sermon in the mount^b, where Christ had taught them to pray? Was he absent, or had he forgot? Or, did he not rightly understand? However it was, Christ yields to his request; and gives the same directions again here, as he had done there. There it is, "After this manner pray ye:" Here, "When ye pray, say."

In the text are two things contained. The one is, Christ's giving a platform of prayer, "When ye pray, say."—The other is, the form given, "Our Father, which art in heaven," &c. The word *ὅταν*, 'when,' leaves us not at liberty, but commands us: and is of the same import with another saying of our Saviour, when he instituted his holy supper, "As oft as ye do this, do it in remembrance of me."

Out of the former, I observe two things:—

I. That we had need to pray.

II. That we had need to be taught to pray.

Two truths confirmed by three witnesses, John, this disciple, and Christ. Ask John why he taught his disciples to pray, he will answer these two things,—viz. because they had need to pray, and because they had need to be taught to pray.—Ask the disciple, why he asked Christ to teach him to pray, he will answer so.—Ask Christ, why he taught his disciples to pray, he will answer so also.—As there are

^a English folio-edition, vol. 2. p. 1135.

^b Matt. vi. 9.

many comments on these subjects, so there is as copious handling them :—so that I shall not handle them at large, but speak to them in a few illustrations, and so pass to insist rather on the second,—viz. the form itself.

I. That we had need to pray : and that, first, because of our duty ; secondly, because of our wants ; in regard of what we owe to God, and in regard of what we expect from him. These both draw and drive us. Accordingly, the Lord's prayer consists of two general parts ;—first, we pray in adoration to his name, kingdom, will, in the three first petitions,—and then, for our wants, in the last. I shall not now speak how prayer is adoration of God, nor how it is commanded by Scripture on that account : I shall only at present show,

First, That it is a duty ; and, that we had need pray, because of our duty. And for that purpose observe ;

1. It is a duty written in nature. That, in Gen. iv. 26, “ Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord,” however understood, shows it from the beginning. Hence the heathen prayed, though they mistook in the manner of praying^c.

2. It is a duty for every man and woman in the world to perform. “ All flesh come to thee^d ;” and^e, “ Let every thing that hath breath, praise the Lord.” It is a duty due upon our creatureship. It is the duty of the holiest men,—“ For this, shall every one, that is godly, pray unto thee^f.” And of the wickedest also, even Magus was to pray to God^g.

It is so a duty for the holiest, that it lay upon Adam in innocency. It lay upon Christ in the flesh,—he prayed both because of his duty and because of his wants ;—“ Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared^h.” It lies upon glorified saints in one part of it,—viz. thanksgiving.

It is so a duty for the unholy, that, though they sin in their prayers, yet they sin worse, if they pray not. Your prayers are not sin as to the act, but because of other things. External adoration is absolutely required to be given to God

^c Matt. vi. 7.

^f Psal. xxxii. 6.

^d Psal. lxxv. 2.

^g Acts, viii. 22.

^e Psal. cl. 6.

^h Heb. v. 7.

by all his creatures ; and if that be not yielded, they doubtless sin. This the wicked man, when he prays, gives to God. They mistake foul, that say, ‘ Pray not, till the Spirit move you.’ Truth saith, ‘ Pray, because duty requires you ; and, in doing your duty, wait for the Spirit.’

3. It is a duty that makes out and sanctifies all our duties : asⁱ, “ Every creature of God is sanctified by the word of God and prayer,”—so in every religious duty that we perform. What is our hearing, reading, meditation, if we pray not that God would sanctify it, and make it beneficial to holy ends and purposes to us ?

4. We had need to pray in reference to our duty, lest God turn us out of all, and own us not for tenants, because we pay not our rent. You read in Exod. xxx. 13, &c, that every Israelite was to give half a shekel for the redemption of his soul ; the rich was not to give more, nor the poor less. This Christ himself paid, Matt. xvii. 24, &c. Prayer is that half-shekel to us. The rich can give no more, and the poor hath this to give,—viz. to make our humble acknowledgments to God for our lives, and our comforts. This is the greatest owning of our homage : and none is so poor as to be without it. The words that signify ‘ prayer’ speak this,—viz. התפלל ‘judging ourselves,’ and החנה ‘depending upon grace.’ We hold all upon grace. The acknowledgment of this is the payment of our homage to our Creator. Would you comfortably enjoy your houses, lands, studies, comforts, pay your rent ;—pray, pray, pray. See what becomes of them, that pay not this homage, Jerem. x. 25 ; “ Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name.”

Secondly ; We had need pray because of our wants. This is the only way for our supply. This is the bucket to draw our water. “ Ask, and you shall have. Call upon me in the time of trouble, and I will deliver thee.” Yea, though God know our wants, we must pray for the supply of them. That is a strange motive to prayer, in Matt. vi. 8 ; “ Your heavenly Father *knoweth* what things ye have need of, before ye ask them.” What need then is there to tell them ? If he will give, he will give whether we ask or ask not.—Yes, pray for what ye stand in need of, though ye are sure of the grant of those things. Daniel prayed for the restoration of

ⁱ 1 Tim. iv. 5.

the captivity, which he knew certain: David for the pardon of his sin, which, he knew, God would pardon. And that for these reasons:

First; God will have his homage. It is reason Elias should have his cake first, that provides meal for the maintenance of the whole family^j.

Secondly; We pray not to show God our wants, as if he were ignorant of them, but to show that we are sensible of them, and to signify that we know he only is able to supply them. Saints are called 'poor,' because they know their wants, and know they live on God's alms. See Rev. iii. 17, 18; "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich," &c. God would that this church of Laodicea should know her wants, and buy, by prayer, the supply of them.

Thirdly, I may add, We had need to pray because of our advantage and benefit, yea, though we receive not particularly what we pray for. Though^k "we cry in the day-time, and God heareth not; and in the night-season, we take no rest;" though God seem^l "to cast off our soul, and hide his face from us;" yet we had need to pray still, because we still want: and if we never receive particularly what we pray for, yet these benefits we shall reap by our prayers:—

1. We keep up and refresh our communion with God. Constant prayer hath this advantage, that it suffereth not God to forget us. "Lord, why hast thou forgotten me?" saith David. Prayer permits not God to forget us, no more than a mother can forget a crying child. He that prays, is God's remembrancer, and gives him no rest.

2. The more we pray, the better God will know our faces at the day of judgment. "I know you not," shall Christ say to some; why?—They never looked towards him, Psal. xiv. 2, 3; "The Lord looked down from heaven, to see, if there were any, that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside," &c. And Isaiah i. 4; there it is said of wicked men נָזְרוּ אַחֲזָר, that they are 'estranged backward,' or 'turned backward.' To these, methinks, the great Judge will say, another day, "Ye were always strangers

^j 1 Kings, xvii. 13.

^k As Psal. xxii. 2.

^l As in Psal. lxxxviii. 14.

to me, such as turned their backs upon me; I could never see your face; and, therefore, verily I know you not." But, on the contrary, he that now confesses Christ, and makes himself known to him by prayers and humble addresses, He will know and confess him at the day of judgment.

3. The more we pray, the more the heart is in heaven, and with God: so that prayer itself is a blessed benefit. "Our conversation is in heaven^m:" this, of all other conversations, is the 'heavenly' conversation. As Christ, when he prayed, was transfiguredⁿ,—so, in prayer, the Christian's heart is changed, the soul is winged, and mounts up, till it gets hold of God; as Jacob had him in his arms, when he prayed.

4. Time will come, that all our prayers and tears shall meet us. God puts our tears in his bottle. God reserves our prayers; not one of them is left; and we shall, in time, receive the fruit of them. In 1 Kings, viii. 59, there Solomon prays, "Let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the Lord, be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant," &c. Prayers are nigh unto God. And thus I have finished the first observation,—viz. That we had need to pray. I come to the second:—

II. That we had need to be taught to pray.—There is no doing spiritual work, but according to the pattern in the mount. God prescribed forms. As at the offering of the first-fruits of the land of Canaan, Deut. xxvi. 3, 4, &c; "Thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the Lord thy God, that I am come unto the country, which the Lord swore unto our fathers for to give us. And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the Lord thy God. And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous," &c. Likewise, there was a form appointed to be said over the beheaded heifer, Deut. xxi. 6, 7, &c; "And all the elders of that city, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer, that is beheaded in the valley: and they shall answer and say, Our hands have

^m Phil. iii. 20. ⁿ Luke, ix. 29.

not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people Israel's charge." The priests, when they blessed the people, had also a form prescribed them, Numb. vi. 23, 24, &c; "Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." And David appointed psalms for the tabernacle, 1 Chron. xvi. 7: and the schools of the prophets, no doubt, had forms delivered to them. So John and Christ taught their disciples to pray, as well as to preach. He had not been the great Teacher, had he not taught a form of prayer. We should have been left untaught in not the least thing.

Consider, also, in the behalf of prescribed forms, that we poor creatures, short-sighted in divine things, know not what we ought to pray for. Peter, at the transfiguration, prayed he "knew not what^o." We often, as Adonijah, are ready to ask our own bane. There is no man, but if God had granted all that ever he asked, it would have been worse with him. Midas' wish may teach this.

But that place of the apostle will be objected against me, in Rom. viii. 26; "The Spirit helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for, as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings, that cannot be uttered." Therefore we need no forms, as long as what we are to pray, is dictated to us by the Spirit.

But I answer, The Spirit is not an oracle within us, to teach us immediately. The word teaches us, what, and how, to ask. But the office of the Spirit is 'to help our infirmities in asking;' our infirmities of memory, our want of application to ourselves of what we know to be our wants. So in the application of doctrines, of promises, the Spirit teaches us no new thing,—but minds us, and brings home to the feeling of our souls those things, we learned from the word.

Consider, moreover, we had need to be taught of God what language to use, when we are speaking to God. It is no small thing to betake ourselves before him, and to speak

^o Luke, ix. 33.

to him, who is the great and living God. Now is it an easy thing to speak, as we ought to do, unto him? Job's friends spake not right things of God^p: for which God tells them "his wrath was kindled against them," and requires them to make atonement for it by "offering up seven bullocks and seven rams." Moses could not speak unto Pharaoh^q; much less how shall the poor creature address unto the great God? Therefore we are advised by the prophet^r Hosea, when we approach unto God, to take words along with us; "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips." Where you see are express *words* put into our mouths to use, when we go and make our confessions unto God.

Ah! gracious God, how ready art thou to give, that biddest us ask, and teachest us to ask also; that puttest words into our mouths, and teachest us what to say to thee. He must needs be ready to pardon sin, that would prevent sin in our prayers, that are begging for pardon.

Christ well knew the majesty of God, and the necessities of men, the need of prayer, and our disability to pray; and therefore he left not himself without a witness of infinite mercy and condescension, nor us without one of the greatest things that we could have prayed for, when he left us this platform of prayer, "When ye pray, say," &c. And so I come to the prayer, or form itself, When ye pray, say, Our Father, &c.

It is an opinion, then, that I can rather wonder at, than understand, that bids when we pray, Say not, Our Father. As I have often grieved to see the neglect and disuse of the Lord's prayer, and to hear the reproach that some have cast upon it,—so have I, as seriously as I could, considered what ground these have had for the disusing of it: and to this hour I rest admiring, and no way satisfied, why they should refrain it, when Christ hath commanded the use of it, as plain as words can speak^s, "After this manner pray ye;" and again, in the text, "When ye pray, say."

The cavils, that are made against the use of it, are obvious.

I To avoid superstition; for unto such ends it hath been used.—Here I cannot but think, how wild it is to extin-

^p Job, xlii. 7, 8.

^q Exod. iv. 10.

^r Hos. xiv. 2.

^s Matt. vi. 9.

guish a thing, good 'per se,' because another useth it ill: to cut down vines, to avoid drunkenness. How subject is he, that makes it all his religion to run from a superstition, to run he knows not whither!

II. Such a narrow form straitens the heart, is too strait, stinting the exercise of the gift of prayer.—And here I cannot but think of solecisms in pride of apparel. It is monstrous to make clothes our pride, which are only a badge of sin, and cover of shame. So it is a solecism to cast away this prayer, upon presumption that we can pray so well, when it is mainly given, because we cannot pray at all.

III. It is generally questioned, whether it be a form of prayer, or a copy to pray by?

IV. If a form, yet what warrant have we to subjoin it to our prayers, as we usually do?

V. And if both, yet that it is not lawful for every one to say, "Our Father."

I shall not dispute these questions. The words of the text plainly answer the most of them. Nor shall I go about to give the sense of the petitions: there are many good comments upon them. I shall only consider the nature of the prayer, and the manner of its giving; that we may be the better satisfied in the manner of its use.

First, As the ten commandments are a sum of all duty, or what is to be done,—so this prayer is a sum of all things to be desired. This is not denied. And as, in the ten commandments, the things, contained in them, are of a twofold concernment,—some things referring to our duty to God, and others, to our duty to our neighbour;—so, in this prayer, are petitions for God's honour, for ourselves, and for others. That God provides for man's memory, that our duty might always be in our eye, and prayer might be always in our mind. He gave both the commandments and the prayer, that so we might see our duty, and beg ability to perform it. So that as the Jews account the law a mercy, we ought to reckon this much more so. What is the law? What is the gospel, if we were not taught to pray to improve both? What is the gift of Christ to man, if the gospel taught not to know Christ? And what is the gospel itself, if Christ had not taught us to pray in it? They that refuse it, know not what Christ did for us, when he gave it.

Secondly, Christ gave this prayer twice,—so the tables were given twice, and the ten commandments rehearsed twice. Some harmonists of the gospel have jumbled both together, and make it but once given, and so make but a wild story of the gospel. But this was given twice, almost a year and a half asunder: first, in his sermon on the mount^t, and that was about Pentecost; and then, in the text, about the feast of Tabernacles, come twelve months after. There, he gave it unasked,—here, asked. He gave the same again, because a better could not be given; and, indeed, because another could not be given.

Thirdly, There is some difference in this prayer as it is repeated by our Saviour. In one place, it is ‘debts,’—in the other, ‘sins.’ One hath *σήμερον* ‘this day,’—the other, *καθ’ ἡμέραν* ‘day by day:’ but especially one hath the conclusion, “For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,” &c; the other hath it not.

These things premised, I shall offer you a view of this prayer through the perspective of some things, that were commonly received in opinion and practice in the church of the Jews at this time. And those, applied hither, may give us a judgment, how the apostles, that were acquainted with these things, received and conceived of this prayer. It is worth observing, how nearly Christ complied with things used in the Jews’ religious practice and civil converse, that were lawful. I know not what reformers should more study than this. A serious student in the gospel, and versed in the Jewish antiquities, might trace him every step.

First, Speaking ‘cum vulgo’ in his speeches.

Secondly, Practising ‘cum vulgo et cum ecclesia,’ ‘with the common people, and with the church,’ where the practice was lawful. Himself did what he taught; “The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’s seat: all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do^u.” Such compliance with common use, we may observe in this matter in hand.

I. The Jews’ daily prayers, at the time when Christ gave this, were eighteen: of which both Talmuds;—and so were large and numerous, *ברכת מינים* being added to them.

II. They reduced all these prayers to a brief epitome; *מעין* ‘a brief form,’ containing the marrow of them all. Every

^t Matt. vi.

^u Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.

one was not able to pray those prayers; therefore, they had אמ שגורה תפלתו בפיו יתפלל Rabbi Akibah^u saith, ת"ק ומעין י"ח "If he have promptness in prayer, pray the eighteen,—if not, the short epitome."

Now let us bring the observation of these things hither. Christ nullifies not the Jews' prayers, nor other prayers when he gave this; but superinduceth this as a perfect form, because ours are imperfect, and an abstract of all prayer, when we cannot but fail in ours:—and, therefore, justly to be added to ours. Observe, in Matt. vi. 7; Christ there condemns the heathens' prayers, not the Jews': and, in ver. 5, he condemns the Jews' hypocrisy, not their prayers.—And himself joined in their prayers in the synagogue. And, therefore, he gave not this prayer to extinguish all others, but to be added to others. So the doctors taught their disciples to pray, and gave them forms, 'Beracoth,' not to extinguish their other prayers, but to be used besides. And so John taught his disciples a set form, and to be used with others. And so Christ, being asked by his disciples to teach them to pray as John did, saith, "When ye pray, say." They understand not how the masters taught their disciples to pray, that doubt whether this be a set form, or no.

III. They had a canon, never to pray מעין and ת"ק but in the plural number. לעולם לשתף איניש נפשיה בהרי ציבו רא "A man must always join in prayer with the synagogue^v." Rambam thus, אל יתפלל ת"ק בלשון יחיד אלא בלשון רבים, "Let not a man pray the short prayer, but in the plural number." They have a rule about מומינין one praying in the plural number, when more are together with him; but ת"ק was to be prayed in the plural number, though he that prayed, was alone by himself; because "it should never seem, as though a man were cut off from the congregation." But we may observe the like in the Lord's prayer, it is plain. Is it not a prayer for a man to pray alone, Matt. vi. 6, where we are bid, "when we pray, to enter into our closet, and to shut the door, and to pray to our Father in secret." And yet it runs in the plural number.

IV. They held no prayer right, where there was no mention of God's name and kingdom. This is a plain canon^w. And they apply, Deut. xxvi. 13, to this,—where he that offered the first-fruits, was to say, "I have not transgressed thy

^u Misna, Surenhusii, vol. 1. p. 14. ^v Bab. Berac. fol. 30. 1. ^w Beracoth, 40. 2.

commandments ;” that is, say they, ‘in failing to say grace, nor forgotten thy name and kingdom.’ This is observed in this prayer likewise, in the two first petitions,—viz. “Hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come.”

V. They used the mention of God’s kingdom and glory in the temple, for the antiphon of their prayers*. “They answered not Amen in the temple, but said ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו העולם ועד העולם Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom for ever and ever.” So in the Rubric of the day of expiation, several prayers of the high-priest are mentioned, and this added, That the people answered as before, ‘Blessed be the name,’ &c.

In synagogues and houses they said, ‘Amen;’ but, in the temple, they said this clause instead of Amen. Christ gives this prayer with this, and without it. The reason of which they mistake, that exclude it quite. Why does Christ give this prayer twice? That it might serve for a public and private prayer. Therefore, in one place, this is the conclusion, ‘For thine is the kingdom,’ &c, which is to be used in public prayers; and in another place, it is not,—viz. when it serves for a private. And this is the reason, why the doxology is added in St. Matthew, and omitted in St. Luke.

VI. The preface of this prayer is the very phrase used by the Jews, when they prayed to God, or spoke of him: אבונא שבשמים “Our Father, which art in heaven.” The phrase is of as large use, as the duty is of extent. Though all have not the spirit of adoption, yet all have cause to call God ‘our Father,’ by virtue of their creation:—“Is not he thy Father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?” We may call him likewise ‘our Father,’ as he is our Lawgiver and great Teacher.

And now think, how the apostles, that knew these things, spoke and thought of this.

First, Could they think it otherwise than a form of prayer ‘verbatim’ to be used, when none were given by the doctors but forms, and when it was thus given twice?

Secondly, Could they think it otherwise than to be used publicly and privately, when, in one place, it concludes with a doxology,—and, in the other, without it?

Thirdly, Could they think it otherwise, than to be sub-

* Hieros. Berac. 13. 3.

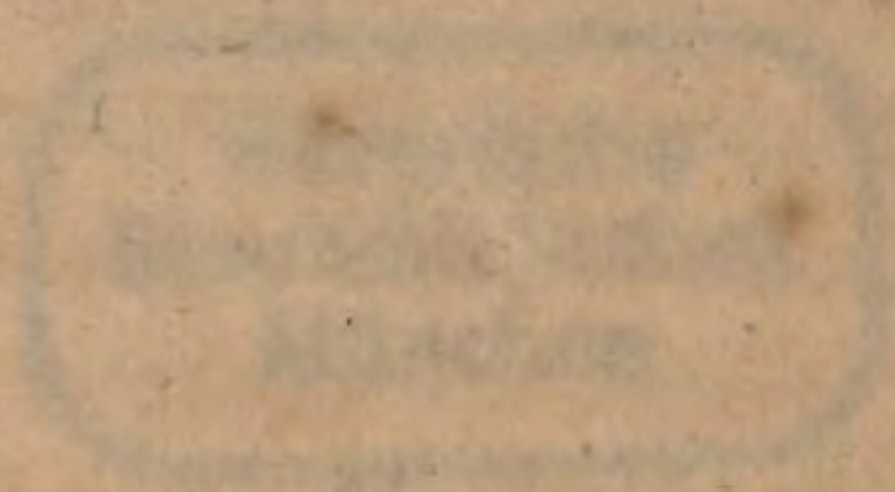
y Deut. xxxii. 6.

joined to our prayers, when Christ gives it in such concurrency to these known customs and tenets of the Jews, and annexes no exception against the answerable use of it?

So have we ground to think of it, and repute it,—a form, a sum of all prayer,—to be used ‘*verbatim*,’ in churches, in closets, to be used single, especially subjoined: and all the more warrantable, because Christ saith, “When ye pray, say, *Our Father*.”

END OF VOL. VI.

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